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Agenda item 18 (b)
Other scientific and technical issues related to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: sustainable wildlife management
Working Group II

Sustainable wildlife management

Draft decision submitted by the Chair of Working Group II

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling its decisions VII/12 of 20 February 2004, 14/7 of 29 November 2018, 15/4 of 19 December 2022, 15/23 of 10 December 2022, 16/6 and 16/12 of 1 November 2024 and 16/15 of 25 October 2024,

Recognizing that sustainable wildlife management contributes to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity[1] and the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework[2] and provides important ecological, economic, social, cultural and spiritual benefits,

Recognizing also the critical role of indigenous peoples and local communities as key stewards of biodiversity,

1. [*Adopts*] the voluntary global guidance on the sustainable management of wildlife applicable to multiple species and multiple practices with a focus on: (a) inclusive and participatory decision-making; (b) the inclusion of multiple systems of knowledge and the recognition of rights; and (c) the equitable distribution of costs and benefits, as contained in the annex to the present decision;

2. *Encourages* Parties, and invites other Governments, subnational and all other levels of governments, including local governments, and relevant organizations and actors, to integrate, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, the voluntary global guidance, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities, in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, national development plans, wildlife policies, relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, legal and institutional frameworks, programmes and other instruments as a contribution to the broader implementation of the sustainable use objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

3. *Strongly encourages* Parties, and invites other Governments, subnational and local governments, and relevant organizations and actors, to strengthen local, regional and transboundary

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.
[2] Decision 15/4, annex.

cooperation on sustainable wildlife management for shared species and ecosystems, including on access to relevant technology, information and data, in a manner that respects national laws and priorities;

4. *Encourages* Parties, and invites other Governments and relevant organizations and actors, to engage the private sector and financial institutions in integrating the voluntary global guidance into their policies, strategies, plans, programmes, projects and practices, including by enhancing supply chain transparency and monitoring wildlife in line with national legislation and Target 15 of the Framework;

5. *Also encourages* Parties, in line with Article 20 of the Convention, and invites other Governments, subnational and local governments and relevant organizations and actors in a position to do so, to support the implementation of the voluntary global guidance, in particular in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States, including through capacity-building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer on voluntary and mutually agreed terms and the mobilization of adequate, predictable, accessible and timely financial resources from all sources, in line with Target 19 of the Framework;

6. *Further encourages* Parties, to ensure, when implementing the voluntary global guidance while applying relevant approaches such as, among others, the One Health approach, including in the context of the WHO Pandemic Agreement, as appropriate and in a manner respectful of the respective mandates of the Convention and the World Health Organization, that responses to disease risks, in particular zoonotic risks, are informed by the best available scientific evidence and traditional knowledge, taking into account potential impacts on biodiversity, wildlife health, public health and customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities;

7. *Encourages* Parties, other Governments and subnational and local governments, and invites indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth, the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management and relevant organizations and actors, to: (a) raise awareness of the voluntary global guidance; (b) monitor its use and assess its effectiveness; and (c) share information, best practices and lessons learned relating to its implementation;

8. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources and in collaboration with Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management and the secretariats of other relevant multilateral environmental agreements:

(a) To promote awareness of, and facilitate the use of, the voluntary global guidance;

(b) To support actions by Parties to address drivers of biodiversity loss and challenges to the sustainable management of wild species;

(c) To compile the information, best practices and lessons learned referred to in paragraph 7 above and make them available through the clearing-house mechanism and to the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres;

(d) To facilitate, in collaboration with the technical and scientific cooperation support centres and relevant organizations, capacity-building for Parties on sustainable wildlife management;

(e) To report on progress related to subparagraphs 8 (a) to (d) above in an information document for the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

Annex

Voluntary global guidance on the sustainable management of wildlife applicable to multiple species and multiple practices

I. Context

1. In decision 14/7 of 29 November 2018, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity [3] recognized sustainable wildlife management as an integrated approach contributing to the objectives of the Convention, namely, the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The present voluntary guidance builds on that decision and subsequent decisions of the Conference of the Parties and will contribute to the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.[4] In particular, the voluntary guidance will contribute to the achievement of Targets 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 22 and 23 of the Framework, which provide a basis for advancing species conservation and recovery, ensuring that the use of and trade in wild species are sustainable, safe and legal and enhancing benefits for people.

2. In the present voluntary guidance, the definition of the term "sustainable wildlife management" is based on the definition used in decision 14/7, that is, the sound management of wildlife species to sustain their populations and habitat over time, considering the socioeconomic needs of human populations.

3. Sustainable wildlife management is supported by a broad international normative framework created, inter alia, by the Convention on Biological Diversity (in particular Articles 6 to 8 and 10), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Also relevant in that regard are the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity[5] and other decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including decisions 14/7, 15/23 of 10 December 2022 and 16/15 of 25 October 2024, on sustainable wildlife management. The Framework further reinforces commitments related to halting species extinction, ensuring the sustainable and legal use of wild species, restoring ecosystems and enhancing benefit-sharing.

4. Wildlife continues to provide essential ecological, economic, cultural and social benefits, especially in regions where it supports livelihoods, food systems and cultural continuity. While many wild species are used at unsustainable levels, others are effectively conserved and managed, demonstrating the importance of context-specific approaches. Those dynamics underscore the need for coordinated, risk-informed, transparent and adaptive management that addresses cumulative pressures and cumulative values, integrates multiple systems of knowledge and ensures that wildlife management remains ecologically sustainable and aligned with conservation objectives.

5. According to *The Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species* of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, many wildlife populations and species are declining, in particular where such pressures as land- and sea-use change, including habitat loss and fragmentation, direct exploitation, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species, are not effectively managed. Those interacting pressures increase extinction risk, erode ecosystem functioning, undermine nature's contributions to people and are intensified by broader indirect socioeconomic drivers, including population growth, increasing per capita consumption and expanding demands for land and sea use. Existing risks, including those caused by the dynamics of wildlife disease, increases in illegal wildlife trade and trafficking and human-wildlife conflict, may

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.
[4] Decision 15/4, annex.
[5] Decision VII/12, annex II.

further exacerbate vulnerabilities, in particular for species with declining populations or restricted ranges and indigenous peoples and local communities closely linked to wildlife.

II. Mandate

6. The present voluntary guidance has been developed pursuant to decision 16/15, in which the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, in collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management, in particular the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species and the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and with inputs from Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, and women, youth and relevant organizations, to prepare draft global guidance on the sustainable management of wildlife applicable to multiple species and multiple practices, with a focus on: (a) inclusive and participatory decision-making; (b) the inclusion of multiple systems of knowledge and the recognition of rights; and (c) the equitable distribution of costs and benefits.

III. Purpose and scope

7. In accordance with decision 16/15, the voluntary global guidance applies to multiple species across terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal ecosystems and to both extractive and non-extractive practices, including fishing, the gathering of plants, fungi and algae from the wild, logging, the harvesting of terrestrial and aquatic animals and wildlife-based tourism.

8. The voluntary guidance addresses gaps identified in the gap analysis to identify areas not adequately covered by existing guidance developed under relevant multilateral environmental agreements and competent intergovernmental organizations[6] and the additional analysis of available guidance, tools and documents related to various areas of sustainable wildlife management that might require complementary guidance.[7] Moreover, the voluntary guidance responds to submissions received further to invitations extended in notifications Nos. 2025-014 and 2025-015 and relevant findings outlined in the aforementioned *Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species*.

9. The purpose of the voluntary guidance is to support Parties in strengthening policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable wildlife management, consistent with the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework. In line with decision 16/15, its objectives are:

(a) To promote inclusive and participatory decision-making;

(b) To facilitate the inclusion of multiple systems of knowledge and the recognition of rights;

(c) To promote the fair and equitable distribution of costs and benefits arising from wildlife use and management.

10. The voluntary guidance, which reflects the recognition that cross-sectoral policy coherence and coordination are important for facilitating its implementation, includes the objective of enhancing policy coherence and institutional coordination across sectors and levels of government. That need featured prominently in submissions received in response to notifications Nos. 2025-014 and 2025-015.

11. The voluntary guidance sets out general principles, safeguards and broad areas for action that Parties may refer to when strengthening national approaches to sustainable wildlife management, including legal and regulated practices such as ecologically sustainable [hunting,] fishing and harvesting of non-timber forest products that contribute to rural livelihoods and food security while maintaining positive biodiversity outcomes. While it does not provide detailed operational guidance

[6] CBD/COP/16/INF/6.
[7] CBD/COP/16/INF/7.

or species-specific technical standards, those issues may, as needed and in accordance with national circumstances, be addressed through complementary national measures and relevant sectoral or taxon-specific instruments, when possible, with the facilitation of the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres.

12. The species groupings and practice categories used in the voluntary guidance (see box below), which are based on the typology applied in the aforementioned thematic assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, are intended to support application across multiple species and practices, while allowing Parties to tailor implementation to national, subnational and local contexts.

Species groupings and practice categories used in the present voluntary guidance

(a) **Species groupings**: the voluntary guidance applies to wild species across terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal ecosystems, including aquatic and terrestrial animals, trees and other plants, fungi and algae;

(b) **Practice categories**: the voluntary guidance addresses both extractive and non-extractive practices. Extractive practices include fishing, the gathering of plants, fungi and algae from the wild, logging and the harvesting of terrestrial and aquatic animals, including the complete or partial removal of organisms, as well as the collection of parts or derivatives from wildlife. Non-extractive practices include wildlife-based tourism and wildlife observation, as well as cultural, spiritual and educational services associated with wildlife. The application of the guidance to fishing should complement, and not replace, measures adopted under national fisheries frameworks and by competent regional and international fisheries bodies.

(c) **Use of categories**: those categories are used solely to organize the voluntary guidance across multiple species and practices. Parties are encouraged to apply them flexibly and in a manner consistent with national legislation, customary governance systems, where applicable, and relevant international obligations. Use of such categories in the guidance does not imply that all species or practices are appropriate for sustainable use. In particular, where alien species pose risks to biodiversity, ecosystem function or native species, management responses should prioritize prevention and control.

IV. Principles

13. The present guidance draws on the Convention, the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, decision 14/7, the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including its Targets 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 22 and 23, and relevant findings from *The Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species* of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. It is underpinned by principles and approaches reflecting the objectives of the Convention (see table 1) that inform the design, interpretation and implementation of sustainable wildlife management in support of biodiversity conservation, human well-being and equitable governance.

Table 1
Principles and approaches informing the voluntary global guidance on sustainable wildlife management

Principles and approaches	*Key considerations*	*Basis*[a]
Ecological sustainability and the precautionary approach	Resource managers and users have the responsibility to ensure that the use of wildlife does not exceed the capacity of ecosystems to maintain or recover ecological processes, species populations, genetic variability and the continued provision of ecosystem	Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines (decision VII/12, annex II)

[a] The sources of information in the "Basis" column were used in the development of the principles and safeguards and have not been cited verbatim in all cases.

Principles and approaches	*Key considerations*	*Basis*[a]
	functions and services on which both biodiversity and people depend.	
	Parties should apply the precautionary approach in their management decisions.	Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines
	Where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat.	Convention on Biological Diversity (preamble)
	To be considered sustainable, wildlife management should consider ecological limits, cumulative impacts and uncertainty and avoid actions that risk irreversible harm to biodiversity, including through early action when evidence indicates high risk.	*The Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species* (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services)
	Ensure that the use and harvesting of and trade in wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimizing impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover, applying the ecosystem approach, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 5)
	Ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity-friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches, contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 10)
[Human rights-based approach and inclusive participation] [Full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive participation of indigenous peoples and local communities]	Subject to its national legislation, each Party shall respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 8 (j))
	Each Party shall, as appropriate, protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 10 (c))
	Recognize that cultural and spiritual values and practices of indigenous and local communities play an important role in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and transmitting its importance to the next generation.	Decision XII/12 B, annex

Principles and approaches	*Key considerations*	*Basis*[a]
	When gaining access to the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, respect their free, prior and informed consent[b], in accordance with relevant national legislation and international instruments, including those listed in subparagraph 7 (a) of section C of the Framework.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (sect. C, para. 7 (a))
	Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 22)
	consider women's roles, knowledge and practices with respect to wildlife management[, and apply the gender-responsive approach, while securing their rights and safety, subject to national legislation].	[Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 23) Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) (decision 15/11, annex)]
Equity and fair distribution of benefits	The needs and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities should be reflected in the equitable distribution of the benefits from the management of wildlife.	Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines
	The costs of management and conservation of wildlife should be internalized and reflected in the distribution of the benefits from its use.	Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines
	Ensure that the management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity, including through sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products and services that enhance biodiversity, and protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 9)
Integration of systems of knowledge and adaptive management	Adaptive wildlife management should be practised, based on multiple systems of knowledge.	Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines
	Adaptive management should be practised on the basis of iterative, timely and transparent feedback derived from monitoring the use, environmental, socioeconomic impacts and the status of the resource being used.	Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines
	When using traditional and local knowledge, Parties should take appropriate actions to ensure that the free, prior and informed consent, consistent with national circumstances, and approval of the holder of that knowledge has been obtained.	Mo'otz Kuxtal Voluntary Guidelines (decision XIII/18, annex)

[b] All references to "free, prior and informed consent" refer to the tripartite terminology of "prior and informed consent", "free, prior and informed consent" or "approval and involvement".

Principles and approaches	*Key considerations*	*Basis*[a]
Policy coherence and institutional alignment	Supportive policies, laws and institutions should be in place at all levels of governance, and there should be effective linkages between these levels.	Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines
	As far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife should be integrated into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 6 (b))
	Each Party undertakes to provide, in accordance with its capabilities, financial support and incentives in respect of national activities which are intended to achieve the objectives of the Convention, in accordance with its national plans, priorities and programmes.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 20 (1))
	The rights and obligations of Parties deriving from any existing international agreement are not affected by the provisions of the Convention, except where the exercise of those rights and obligations would cause a serious damage or threat to biological diversity.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 22 (1))
	Strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and promote development of and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries, fostering joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthening scientific research and monitoring capacities, commensurate with the ambition of the goals and targets of the Framework.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 20)

V. Safeguards

14. Safeguards in the present voluntary guidance (see table 2) are procedures and measures intended to ensure that sustainable wildlife management interventions avert or minimize unintended adverse impacts on biodiversity and promote ecological integrity, social equity and accountability. Safeguards may include environmental and social impact assessments and public participation and should be applied in a context-specific, transparent and continuously improvable manner in line with national circumstances and legislation.

Table 2
Safeguards for the sustainable management of wildlife

Thematic areas	*Safeguards*	*Basis*[a]
Ecological integrity	Wildlife management measures should maintain ecological integrity and biodiversity, ensuring that management does not result in population decline of species, habitat degradation, loss of ecosystem function or the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 8, in particular 8 (h))
	Interventions should not transfer ecological or social risks from one species, ecosystem or community to	Decision V/6, annex II (principles 3 and 5)

[a] The sources of information in the "Basis" column were used in the development of the principles and safeguards and have not been cited verbatim in all cases.

Thematic areas	*Safeguards*	*Basis*[a]
	another, nor exacerbate cumulative pressures across landscapes and seascapes.	
	Wildlife-related interventions should, as appropriate, be subject to environmental, social and economic impact assessments and supported by biodiversity monitoring, including through participatory activities involving indigenous peoples and local communities, and evaluation and include cumulative impact assessments where multiple interventions or pressures affect the same species, ecosystems or communities.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 14)
	Wildlife management measures should prevent the introduction and spread of invasive alien species by identifying and managing pathways for their introduction and supporting their eradication or control, especially in priority sites.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 6)
Social equity and human well-being	Sustainable wildlife management measures should be science-based and ensure that the use and harvesting of and trade in wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimizing impacts on non-target species and ecosystems and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover, applying the ecosystem approach, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.	Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Targets 5 and 9)
	Sustainable wildlife management measures should enable progress towards human-wildlife coexistence and should, where relevant, explicitly identify, prevent and mitigate human-wildlife conflict, recognizing that wildlife can pose a direct threat to safety, livelihoods and well-being of people and that unmanaged conflict can drive retaliation and undermine conservation and sustainable development objectives.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 4)
	Management actions affecting customary access, subsistence use or culturally significant practices should involve affected communities and, where appropriate, include fair and effective forms of redress.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Articles 8 (j) and 10 (c))
	Benefit-sharing arrangements should be transparent and based on clear rules, and should not exacerbate existing inequalities, including gender-based disparities.	Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines (principle 12, operational guidelines)
	Where major wildlife-related interventions are proposed, including species translocations, invasive species management or the establishment of protected areas, impact assessments should, as appropriate, identify cultural values and potential trade-offs, with full and effective participation of affected indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant stakeholders.	Decision VIII/28, annex and decision VII/16 F
Transparency and accountability	Sustainable wildlife management frameworks should promote transparent governance, including access to relevant information and data relating, for example, to monitoring results, harvests, licensing systems and revenue allocation.	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 21)

Thematic areas	*Safeguards*	*Basis*[a]
	Wildlife harvest, handling and trade practices should, as appropriate, comply with animal welfare, ethical and safety standards, norms and values of indigenous peoples and local communities, national legislation and applicable international obligations.	Convention on Biological Diversity (Articles 8 (l) and 10 (b))

VI. Key elements for developing and implementing policies on sustainable wildlife management

15. Pursuant to decision 16/15, the present voluntary guidance is based on the seven key elements of effective policy actions, derived from *The Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species*, which were identified for use in developing and implementing policies on the sustainable use of wild species. Those key elements are:

(a) Inclusive and participatory decision-making;

(b) Inclusion of multiple systems of knowledge and recognition of rights;

(c) Equitable distribution of costs and benefits;

(d) Policies tailored to local socioecological contexts;

(e) Monitoring of social and ecological conditions and practices;

(f) Coordinated and aligned policies across sectors;

(g) Robust institutions, from customary to statutory.

16. Elements (a), (b) and (c) are addressed principally in sections VII.B, C and D below, respectively, while elements (d), (e), (f) and (g) are integrated across the present voluntary guidance, including in section VII.A and sections IV and V.

17. The key elements were identified in *The Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species* of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services as enhancing the sustainability of the use of wild species and as a prerequisite for stronger implementation across practices. They influence the effectiveness of sustainable wildlife management by strengthening legitimacy, supporting adaptive and context-specific implementation, improving policy coherence and coordination and reinforcing the institutional conditions needed to respond to socioecological change.

VII. Actions for implementation of sustainable wildlife management

18. The present section comprises a set of four possible actions that Parties may consider in the context of supporting the implementation of sustainable wildlife management: crosscutting elements to support policy coherence and cross-sectoral integration; inclusive and participatory decision-making; inclusion of multiple systems of knowledge and the recognition of rights; and the equitable distribution of costs and benefits. Subsections B, C and D reflect the focus of the areas specified in decision 16/15, and subsection A was added because its subject matter figured prominently in the submissions received following the issuance of notifications Nos. 2025-014 and 2025-015.

19. Implementation of the present voluntary guidance may be adapted to national and local contexts, taking into account ecological conditions, cultural diversity and governance systems. In adapting the voluntary guidance, Parties may consider differences among ecological regions, including temperate, tropical, subtropical, arid, polar, mountain, island, coastal and urban contexts, recognizing that implementation needs, pressures, data availability and governance arrangements may vary across regions and practices.

20. Moreover, regional, practice-specific and technical tools may, as appropriate, complement the voluntary guidance in areas where more detailed methodologies, indicators, scenario analyses or operational standards are needed.

A. Cross-cutting elements: policy coherence and cross-sectoral integration

21. Policy coherence and cross-sectoral integration are important because sustainable wildlife management is influenced by interacting drivers across sectors and governance levels and within diverse socioecological contexts. In the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services assessment, coordinated and aligned policies, robust customary and statutory institutions, monitoring of socioecological conditions and practices and policies tailored to local socioecological contexts are identified as key elements for enhancing sustainability. Those approaches can help to align measures across relevant sectors and scales, strengthen institutional support for implementation, reduce fragmentation and policy inconsistencies and enable adaptive responses to changing socioecological conditions. The following actions should consequently be taken as appropriate and in accordance with national legislation, circumstances and priorities:

(a) Promoting coherent policy, legal and institutional conditions for the sustainable and inclusive management of wildlife, including sustainable wildlife economies consistent with conservation objectives and ecological limits, traceability requirements, equitable benefit-sharing and the rights and livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and relevant organizations and actors, including small-scale harvesters;

(b) Enhancing cross-sectoral regulations and coordination to address key pressures on wildlife management by identifying lead agencies, coordination and monitoring mechanisms, and relevant protocols for:

(i) Prevention of wildlife crime, illegal harvesting and unsustainable use, take or trade;

(ii) Prevention of habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation;

(iii) Mitigation of and adaptation to climate-related risks and climate change impacts;

(iv) Prevention of biosecurity risks, invasive alien species and disease risks, in particular zoonotic risks;

(v) Reduction of pollution;

(vi) Management of legal, sustainable and traceable wildlife use and trade;

(c) Promoting the embedding of ecological connectivity and habitat conservation in spatial and development planning by mapping and safeguarding key habitats, corridors and migratory pathways, as well as areas of cultural and socioecological importance, incorporating them into zoning and strategic environmental assessment processes and aligning actions with national land- or sea-use plans and, where relevant, regional and global connectivity initiatives;

(d) Promoting stronger integration of sustainable wildlife management issues into green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas, where appropriate, through the adoption of nature-based solutions and ecosystems-based approaches and by ensuring biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, updating urban wildlife management guidelines, establishing protocols for the prevention of and response to human-wildlife interactions in urban areas and supporting, through the significant increase in the area, quality and connectivity of, access to and benefits from such spaces in urban and densely populated areas, cross-sectoral initiatives that enhance wildlife literacy and encourage urban residents' engagement in the stewardship of neighbourhood wildlife;

(e) Strengthening regional and transboundary cooperation for shared populations, species and ecosystems by establishing or using existing regional platforms and developing and integrating bilateral or multilateral arrangements for coordinated conservation actions, monitoring, harmonized harvest or trade controls and the joint management of transboundary protected areas and corridors;

(f) Supporting business, private and financial sectors, as appropriate, in undertaking biodiversity mainstreaming within and across all sectors, with a view to ensuring the sustainable management of wild species, including by ensuring that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal; eliminating wildlife crime and unsustainable use, take and legal trade;

and regulating the disclosure by businesses, companies and financial institutions of risks, dependencies and impacts on wildlife along their supply chains, including through the monitoring of biodiversity-related illegal financial transactions;

(g) Addressing challenges to the sustainable management of wild species, such as landscape and seascape changes, climate change, pollution, invasive alien species, overexploitation and zoonotic diseases;

(h) Strengthening cooperation and coherence with the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and competent intergovernmental organizations, including through the use of existing instruments and available data, as appropriate, to avoid duplication;

(i) Promoting more systematic integration of climate-related risks into wildlife management, in particular in climate-vulnerable developing countries, through ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions and by assessing, where relevant, the effects of climate change on species populations, habitats, ecological connectivity, disease dynamics, human-wildlife interactions and the sustainability of use and by adjusting management responses in the light of those effects;

(j) Strengthening or establishing national wildlife inventories, monitoring systems and adaptive management frameworks to support the periodic review and evidence-informed adjustment of management instruments, including quotas, permits and management plans, in the light of ecological evidence, risks and uncertainty;

(k) Strengthening minimum monitoring and reviewing arrangements, as appropriate, by establishing baseline ecological, economic and social information, the periodic review of management measures, the monitoring of outcomes and cumulative pressures and transparent reporting mechanisms that support adaptive management and timely adjustment where practices are found to be unsustainable or inequitable;

(l) Advancing targeted formal, non-formal and informal education, awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives in response to specific implementation needs, through training of trainers and partnerships with academic institutions, indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres and community institutions;

(m) Supporting the mobilization of adequate human, technical and financial resources by integrating costs associated with wildlife management into sectoral budgets, gaining access to biodiversity finance mechanisms, including by facilitating access to international biodiversity financing mechanisms, in accordance with national priorities, circumstances and capacities, and, where appropriate, leveraging sustainable financing instruments consistent with national priorities and safeguards.

B. Inclusive and participatory decision-making

22. Inclusive and participatory decision-making strengthens legitimacy, improves the quality and acceptability of decisions and supports the implementation of sustainable wildlife management that is responsive to socioecological contexts. Consistent with submissions received in response to notifications Nos. 2025-014 and 2025-015, effective wildlife management depends on the transparent, structured, full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, civil society organizations, scientists and relevant authorities, and participation should extend beyond consultation to include shared decision-making, co-management and co-design, as appropriate and in accordance with national legislation and circumstances. The following actions should be taken to support sustainable wildlife management, as appropriate and in accordance with-national legislation, circumstances and priorities:

(a) Facilitating fit-for-purpose participatory processes by ensuring early stakeholder mapping, clear roles and responsibilities, accessible information in relevant languages, adequate

timelines and financial resources for participation, and documentation on how inputs were considered;

(b) Promoting the early engagement of stakeholders in the design of wildlife management measures and policies, including harvest regimes, spatial planning and restoration initiatives, applying free, prior and informed consent procedures, as applicable;

(c) Supporting the participation in decision-making processes, as appropriate, of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and relevant stakeholders, such as public authorities, private landowners, wildlife managers, civil society, academia, private sector actors and health and veterinary authorities;

(d) Promoting or strengthening participatory governance mechanisms through clear terms of reference, decision-making procedures and mechanisms for managing interactions where statutory, customary and private systems intersect;

(e) Recognizing and supporting community-based governance instruments, as applicable, such as biocultural community protocols, community forestry arrangements, co-management approaches and buffer zone governance systems, and recognizing the contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities and their knowledge systems, including cultural, spiritual and relational values associated with wildlife, through technical assistance, legal support, capacity-building and appropriate funding, consistent with national legislation and relevant international obligations;

(f) Promoting and, where appropriate, strengthening tenure and access arrangements through the recognition of the role of customary wildlife management systems in the development of policy instruments and tools, where applicable, and clarifying how tenure and use rights relate to wildlife governance, benefit-sharing and responsibilities for stewardship;

(g) Facilitating transparent access to relevant socioecological and economic information by publishing management plans, harvest or quota rationales, monitoring summaries, benefit-sharing arrangements, licensing rules and revenue allocation, while protecting sensitive information when disclosure, for example, of poaching hotspots or confidential traditional knowledge, could increase risks;

(h) Promoting balanced representation in wildlife governance bodies through such measures as quotas and the rotation of seats and by addressing barriers faced by women, youth and underrepresented groups, including those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity, in line with national legislation;

(i) Facilitating the establishment of accessible grievance prevention, dispute resolution and conflict management mechanisms and ensuring that outcomes are monitored and used to improve policy and practice;

(j) Applying participatory risk assessments, scenario planning and trade-off analyses when decisions with significant ecological or social implications are being taken. Parties may consider providing, where needed, facilitation, technical support and capacity-building to enable equitable participation;

(k) Promoting inclusive dialogue and joint action in contexts of human-wildlife conflict and zoonotic disease risk by linking wildlife authorities with communities, health and veterinary services and relevant sectors and by using practical measures, such as early warning systems, community response teams and agreed protocols for safe handling and reporting.

C. Inclusion of multiple systems of knowledge and recognition of rights

23. Sustainable wildlife management can be strengthened when it draws on multiple systems of knowledge and is implemented in ways that ensure the recognition of relevant rights, governance systems and responsibilities. Submissions received in response to notifications Nos. 2025-014 and

2025-015 highlighted that scientific knowledge is often more effective when considered alongside traditional knowledge and that respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including with regard to customary governance systems, tenure arrangements and rights relating to knowledge, is an important condition for effective and equitable implementation. Parties should advance sustainable wildlife management through the following actions, as appropriate and in accordance with national legislation, circumstances and priorities:

(a) Providing recognition for local and customary governance systems, tenure arrangements and rights, and community-defined rules relevant to sustainable wildlife management, consistent with national legislation and relevant international obligations, including through legal recognition, support for customary institutions and negotiated agreements where systems overlap;

(b) Encouraging approaches that support the application of appropriate protocols and procedures for seeking the free, prior and informed consent and approval of knowledge holders, while respecting intellectual property over traditional knowledge, data sovereignty, culturally appropriate benefit-sharing from knowledge use and community-defined access rules;

(c) Facilitating the establishment of mechanisms for integrating scientific and traditional systems of knowledge as distinct and complementary sources of evidence in wildlife planning, monitoring and review;

(d) Facilitating community-based knowledge documentation systems and locally governed repositories, such as community-managed archives, databases or other systems for storing and transmitting knowledge, where communities agree to them, while respecting community-defined access, use and sharing protocols;

(e) Fostering intergenerational knowledge transfer and adaptive learning processes to allow management systems to respond to socioecological change, through community exchanges, mentorship programmes and learning-by-doing approaches embedded in management cycles;

(f) Enabling, where appropriate, the integration of community-based biodiversity monitoring and citizen science into national biodiversity inventories and reporting systems, using standardized yet adaptable methods, training and resourcing for data collection, management and feedback to communities, including participatory discussions on the interpretation of results and their use in management decisions;

(g) Incorporating, where relevant and appropriate, attention to population structure, connectivity and wild genetic diversity, drawing on scientific and traditional systems of knowledge and applying safeguards relating to consent, culturally appropriate use of knowledge and data governance;

(h) Strengthening capacities for species inventories and population assessments, as well as for monitoring of habitat, genetic diversity and taxonomy, ecological monitoring, the use of digital technologies and the management of biodiversity databases, by prioritizing risk-based and ecosystem-based approaches in data-poor contexts and promoting open and FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) principles, where feasible;

(i) Encouraging transparent access to monitoring and management information, as appropriate, while applying safeguards for sensitive data, the disclosure of which may harm conservation efforts, biosecurity measures or contradict national legislation, for example, geospatial data on habitats, the locations of threatened species or confidential traditional knowledge;.

(j) Advancing the One Health approach by integrating wildlife and livestock health surveillance into sustainable wildlife management frameworks; establishing information-sharing channels among environment, forestry, fisheries, agriculture and health authorities; and incorporating safe handling, biosecurity and risk communication measures into wildlife management plans, as

appropriate and consistent with the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health[8] and the One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022–2026) of the Quadripartite collaboration on One Health;

(k) Encouraging, where One Health approaches are applied, the monitoring and periodic review of outcomes for wildlife populations, ecosystem integrity, human well-being, domestic animal health and spillover risk reduction, to strengthen evidence-based learning and adaptive management;

(l) Facilitating through technology transfer, on voluntary and mutually agreed terms, technical and scientific cooperation, capacity-building and access to financial resources, the use of emerging technologies, such as remote sensing, acoustic monitoring, eDNA, digital permitting and traceability tools, in monitoring and enforcement, ensuring equity, accessibility and cultural appropriateness.

D. Equitable distribution of costs and benefits

24. The equitable distribution of costs and benefits is important for sustainable wildlife management, as it strengthens fairness, legitimacy and long-term effectiveness, in particular where the burdens and benefits associated with wildlife use, conservation and coexistence are unevenly distributed. In the submissions received in response to notifications Nos. 2025-014 and 2025-015, it was highlighted that wildlife management was more likely to be effective and durable when those who bore the costs of living with wildlife, including indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant stakeholders, derived tangible, intangible and equitable benefits from their stewardship, sustainable use and conservation efforts. Parties should advance sustainable wildlife management through the following actions, as appropriate and in accordance with national policies, legislation, circumstances and priorities:

(a) Ensuring that benefit-sharing arrangements encompass both monetary and non-monetary benefits, such as capacity-building, technology transfer on voluntary and mutually agreed terms, equitable access to information and monitoring results, institutional strengthening, the recognition of customary governance systems and support for cultural traditions, traditional knowledge, practices of indigenous peoples and local communities and subsistence use;

(b) Facilitating fair, equitable, transparent, participatory and accountable benefit-sharing arrangements on the basis of clear eligibility, governance structures and grievance mechanisms, while considering other social and environmental safeguarding measures;

(c) Giving due attention to the differentiated costs borne by those living with wildlife, such as human-wildlife conflict, opportunity costs and regulatory burdens, through preventive, mitigative and incentive-based measures, giving particular attention to gender-differentiated impacts, women's participation and leadership, and persons in vulnerable situations;

[(d) Promoting measures to protect the safety and rights of [environmental human rights defenders, with consideration given to gender-based violence and gender-responsive approaches][actors involved in sustainable wildlife management], in line with national legislation, priorities and circumstances;]

(e) Facilitating, where appropriate, the establishment or strengthening of insurance mechanisms, compensation and relief schemes and other incentive-based instruments to address crop damage, livestock loss and other costs associated with human-wildlife interactions in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, thereby supporting coexistence and reducing social and economic vulnerability;

(f) Enabling legal and policy frameworks that allow benefits from sustainable wildlife use, trade and tourism and other sustainable wildlife economy activities to reach indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant stakeholders by clarifying revenue-sharing formulas, devolving

[8] Decision 16/19, annex.

appropriate fiscal authority and supporting social enterprises and businesses of indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth;

(g) Strengthening accountability for benefit-sharing of wildlife revenues through independent oversight, regular financial and performance audits, the disclosure of revenue flows and allocations and accessible grievance and remedy mechanisms, together with protections against retaliation, in accordance with national policies and legislation;

(h) Recognizing the roles of small-scale harvesters, processors and social enterprises within wildlife value chains and ensuring that regulatory measures do not disproportionately disadvantage actors operating within local and customary systems;

(i) Promoting diversified and climate resilient livelihood strategies linked with sustainable wildlife management, including sustainable use;

(j) Applying sustainability safeguards, such as biodiversity monitoring, to sustainable wildlife management activities, for example wildlife observation and nature-based tourism, including ecotourism;

(k) Exploring innovative and sustainable financial mechanisms, such as biodiversity-related levies, payments for ecosystem services, public-private partnerships and biodiversity credit schemes, with clear socioecological safeguards, including additionality, avoidance of perverse incentives, the monitoring of biodiversity outcomes and respect for rights of stakeholders involved in sustainable wildlife management;

(l) Promoting access to markets for sustainably sourced wildlife parts and derivatives, while ensuring that commercialization remains aligned with conservation objectives and within ecological limits and providing incentives for alternative business models with clear socioecological benefits, while taking into account the precautionary approach;

(m) Supporting, where wildlife populations, habitats or ecological functions have declined, restoration and recovery initiatives that should take into account the equitable distribution of costs and benefits, including effects on tenure, access, livelihoods and customary sustainable use, and provide for the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate.