

COMMUNIQUÉ

Liaison Group on Bushmeat concludes in Buenos Aires with recommendations to the World Forestry Congress

Montreal, 21 October 2009 – The Convention on Biological Diversity’s Liaison Group on Bushmeat held its first meeting in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), in Buenos Aires from 15 to 17 October 2009 at the Secretariat of the Argentine Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.

The objective of the meeting was to develop policy recommendations for the sustainable use and conservation of bushmeat species, building on those included in the CBD Technical Series No. 33, *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wildlife-based Resources: The Bushmeat Crisis*.

The meeting was convened in response to decision IX/5 of the Conference of the Parties, which urges Parties to strengthen the implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity and to address, as a matter of priority, major human-induced threats to forest biodiversity, including unregulated and unsustainable use of forest products and resources (including unsustainable hunting and trade of bushmeat, and their impacts on non-target species).

The loss of tropical forest fauna is reaching critical levels. Forestry operations are often closely linked to commercial bushmeat hunting through logging roads and crews. The “empty-forest syndrome” and biodiversity loss caused by habitat degradation and the over-exploitation of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians in many tropical and sub-tropical countries has become a global threat. For example:

- Up to 75 per cent of tropical tree species depend on animal seed dispersal. Many tree species will no longer be able to reproduce without their seed dispersers, affecting ecosystem services.
- The degradation of forest ecosystems makes national and local economies weaker and more vulnerable to climate change.
- Food security for indigenous peoples and local communities is at risk. Up to 80 per cent of protein intake in rural households in central Africa comes from wild meat.
- Increasing human-wildlife contact and the related bushmeat trade spreads infectious diseases, such as the Ebola and the Nipah viruses.
- Habitat loss increases human-wildlife conflict and reduces the potential for sustainable wildlife management.

The meeting was attended by experts from Argentina, Cambodia, Thailand, Viet Nam, United States of America, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Permanent Secretariat of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the IUCN Species Survival Commission, the Bushmeat Crisis Task Force, the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), the Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique (CIRAD), TRAFFIC International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

In addressing the participants Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, emphasized that: “Although solutions exist to address the urgent food security and biodiversity challenges in many developing countries, strong political leadership is needed urgently in order to move from words to action. The 2010 United Nations International Year of Biodiversity, including the meeting Heads of State and Government in New York in September 2010, provides a unique opportunity to seize the moment and respond as a community of nations to the unprecedented loss of biodiversity compounded by climate change.”

In a joint statement to the World Forestry Congress, the FAO, CIFOR, CIC and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity highlighted the following key recommendations from the Group that are of relevance to the forest sector:

- *Sustainable management of wildlife*: Capacity building, incentives and alternatives must be implemented for hunters, traders and consumers to sustainably manage bushmeat.
- *Climate change*: Mechanisms such as REDD+ should take into account the importance of wildlife for healthy ecosystems and for the permanence of forest carbon stocks and forest adaptation capacity.
- *Forest concessions and certification*: Management plans and certification schemes for sustainable forest management (SFM) must include wildlife management, to maintain healthy and productive forest ecosystems.
- *Rights and tenure*: Local communities should be empowered to manage, and be accountable for, managing local resources in their own – and the national – best interest.
- *Good governance*: Policies and legal frameworks need to be reviewed and strengthened with full stakeholder participation, including all relevant sectors.
- *Landscape-level management*: An effective and coherent network of protected areas is essential but not enough. The conservation and sustainable management of wildlife outside of protected areas is equally important.
- *Partnerships*: Effective collaboration among national and international actors is needed.
- *Capacity-building*: Effective management, including law enforcement, requires capacity building at national and local levels.
- *Science*: Decision-making should be based on best available scientific information; further research and better management of information are needed.

The bushmeat crisis is a complex problem, but feasible solutions do exist in many locations and regions. The Liaison Group recommends an open and transparent debate at the national level to better address the issue.

The statement was presented by the Chair of the meeting, Somaly Chan (Director of Biodiversity, Cambodia, and Vice-President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity). A panel consisting of Henri Djombo, Minister of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Congo, Dr. Jane Goodall, Director of the Jane Goodall institute, and Jan McAlpine, Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests, welcomed the statement and the activities under the Convention on Biological Diversity to address the bushmeat crisis. Minister Djombo pledged to continue to strengthen the activities of his Government to safeguard wildlife and to further improve the sustainable use, including hunting, following actions already taken in recent years such as the designation of protected areas.

The Group also invited the Executive Secretary to integrate its recommendations into the in-depth review on sustainable use, which will be tabled at the fourteenth meeting of the Convention’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), to be held in Nairobi in May next year.

The full report of the Bushmeat Liaison Group meeting and the joint statement is available at www.cbd.int

For more information please contact the CBD Secretariat at secretariat@cbd.int

Further information is also available in CBD Technical Series No. 33 “The Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wildlife-based Resources: The Bushmeat Crisis” (www.cbd.int/ts)
