

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR MARINE TURTLES OF THE ATLANTIC COAST OF AFRICA

Agreement under Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

among

The Ministry of Environment, Angola
The Ministry of Rural Development, Benin
The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Cameroon
The Ministry of Tourism, Transport and the Sea, Cape Verde
The Ministry of Mines and Environment, Congo
The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Côte d'Ivoire
The Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, Fisheries and Forests,
Democratic Republic of Congo
The Ministry of Forests and Environment, Equatorial Guinea
The Ministry of Water, Forests and Fisheries, charged with Reforestation, Gabon
The Department of State for Presidential Affairs, Fisheries and Natural Resources, Gambia
The Ministry of Lands and Forestry, Ghana
The Ministry of Mines, Geology and Environment, Guinea
The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources, Guinea-Bissau
The Ministry of Rural Development and Environment, Mauritania
The Ministry of Agriculture, Equipment and Environment, Morocco
The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia
The Federal Environmental Protection Agency, Nigeria
The Ministry of Economy, Sao Tome and Principe
The Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection, Senegal
The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment, Sierra Leone
The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa
The Ministry of Environment, Togo
The appropriate authority (to be specified upon signature) of Liberia, the Azores and
Madeira (Portugal), and Canary Islands (Spain)

The undersigned, acting on behalf of the respective authorities named above,

Aware that the populations of marine turtles frequenting the territorial waters and beaches of the Atlantic coast of Africa, from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope, including Macaronesia, are seriously threatened;

Recognizing that members of the six species of marine turtles concerned -- namely, *Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Lepidochelys kempii*, and *Lepidochelys olivacea* -- are highly migratory, which makes their survival dependent on the conservation of widespread marine habitats (including migratory corridors, coral reefs, feeding grounds, and nesting beaches);

Aware that pollution of various marine habitats, destruction of coastal wetlands, industrial fishing activities, international trade and other man-induced threats, if not properly mitigated and managed, could lead to a further decline in marine turtle populations;

Concerned also by the harm caused to marine turtles by trawlers and other vessels of third countries operating in the waters covered by the present Memorandum;

Noting that marine turtles are listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and, therefore, are the object of concerted and co-operative actions under that Convention;

Noting the existence of other international instruments relevant for the conservation of marine turtles on the Atlantic coast of Africa, notably the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;

Acknowledging their shared responsibility for the conservation and wise management of the marine turtle populations frequenting their waters and shores, and the desirability of involving all Range States, as well as concerned third parties and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in a common initiative;

Conscious that concerted, co-ordinated action must be taken immediately to address the threats posed to the existing populations;

AGREE to work closely together to improve the conservation status of the marine turtles and the habitats on which they depend.

To that end, in a spirit of mutual understanding and co-operation, they shall:

1. Endeavour to put in place measures for the conservation and, where necessary and appropriate, strict protection of marine turtles at all stages of their life cycle (including eggs, hatchlings, juveniles, sub-adults and adults);
2. Review and, as necessary, revise national legislation, and ratify or accede to those international conventions most relevant for the conservation of marine turtles, so as to enhance the legal protection given to these species;
3. Implement in their respective countries, subject to availability of necessary resources, the provisions of the Conservation Plan annexed to this memorandum. The Conservation Plan shall aim to improve basic knowledge of species and migration routes, reduce mortality of marine turtles, enhance co-operation among Range States and secure funding for the initiation and/or continuation of conservation programmes. It shall include *inter alia* protection measures for beaches used by marine turtles for nesting and measures to reduce, as far as possible, the taking of marine turtles, particularly in areas used for foraging. The Conservation Plan shall also provide for the identification of key habitats for nesting and foraging; for population monitoring and research; and the eventual preparation of national marine turtle action plans that take into account the needs of local human populations. Implementation of this Memorandum, including the Conservation Plan, shall be assessed at regular meetings to be attended by representatives of each of the Governments concerned and persons or organizations technically qualified in, or relevant to, the conservation of marine turtles. Such meetings shall be convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and shall be hosted by and organized in collaboration with one of the Range States.

4. Facilitate the expeditious exchange of scientific, technical and legal information needed to coordinate conservation measures; and co-operate with recognized scientists of international organizations and other Range States in order to facilitate their work conducted in relation to the Conservation Plan;
5. Designate a national correspondent to serve as a focal point for the Parties and communicate without delay the name and complete contact details of this correspondent (and any changes thereto) to the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species;
6. Provide to the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, no later than 30 September of each year, an annual report on implementation of this Memorandum in each of the respective countries. The Secretariat shall transmit to each of the Range States all of the reports received, together with an overview report which it shall compile on the basis of information at its disposal.

Basic principles

1. This Memorandum of Understanding shall be considered an agreement under Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. The Memorandum shall take effect on 1 July 1999 for all Range States that have signed it. It shall remain open for signature indefinitely, and shall become effective for all other signatory States on the first day of the first month following the date on which they sign. The Memorandum of Understanding shall remain in effect indefinitely subject to the right of any Party to terminate its participation by providing one year's written notice to all of the other Parties.
2. The Memorandum of Understanding, including the Conservation Plan, may be amended by consensus of the signatory States.
3. The working language for all matters related to this Memorandum of Understanding shall be English and French, each version being equally authentic.

Done at Abidjan on this twenty-ninth day of May, 1999.

Fait à Abidjan le vingt-neuf mai 1999.