

# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

## 48<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

*Bonn, Germany, 23 – 24 October 2018*

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### REPORT OF THE COP PRESIDENCY

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48<sup>TH</sup> Standing Committee meeting  
23-24 October 2018 Bonn, Germany

At CMS COP12 held on 23-28 October in Manila, the Conference of the Parties adopted the resolution (UNEP/CMSCOP12 4.2) formalizing the role of the Chair of the Conference as President of the COP and during the intersessional period. The COP Presidency is tasked to help facilitate political action and positive outcomes that further advance the objectives of the Convention, including steering efforts towards implementing the Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the Conference of Parties. The Resolution also urges the COP Presidency to provide a report on its activities to the Standing Committee in its subsequent meetings. As Chair of CMS COP12, the Philippines through its Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is privileged to take on the role of the COP Presidency and hereby reports its activities to the 48<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee.

**1. Synergies with other international conventions, organizations and Range States**

- 1.a As the national focal point for the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SDI) of the CBD, the DENR participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the SDI held on 03 July 2018 in Montreal, Canada. The Philippines supported the adoption of the following recommendations that promotes the work of the CMS:
- i. SBI recommendation on *Cooperation with Other Conventions, International Organizations and Initiatives* (CBD/SBI/REC/2/9) which calls upon Parties to provide further support for the implementation of the activities of the proposed work plan of the global “Coastal Forum” focused on coastal wetland conservation as adopted during the CMS COP12 and requests the Executive Secretary to further coordinate the “Caring for Coasts” initiative with the secretariat of the CMS and other relevant partners, in order to advance synergies in their work on the management and restoration of coastal ecosystems worldwide; and
  - ii. SBI recommendation on *Mainstreaming of Biodiversity Within and Across Sectors* (CBD/SBI/REC/2/3) which recognized the work of the CMS and other international organizations to advance biodiversity practices by businesses. The SBI Recommendation welcomed the resolution of the CMS COP12 on mainstreaming of biodiversity into the energy sector, in particular on the development of renewable energy that takes into account environmental impact assessments and monitoring and which shall be appropriately integrated in the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. It is noted that the Recommendation decided the creation of an Informal Advisory Group on Mainstreaming of Biodiversity which will be composed of experts competent in fields relevant to the mainstreaming of biodiversity.
- 1.b In furtherance to CMS COP12 resolution (UNEP/CMS 12.25) on promoting conservation of critical intertidal and other coastal habitats for migratory species (which highlights the importance of intertidal and other coastal habitats for 64 species listed on CMS Appendix I) and requesting the Secretariat to explore with other relevant multilateral environmental agreements the possibility to set up a global ‘Coastal Forum’, to raise the profile of intertidal wetland and associated coastal habitats, the Philippines has proposed a draft resolution to the Ramsar COP13 on this concern. The draft resolution request the Ramsar Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to seek input from the scientific subsidiary bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements, to establish a multi-stakeholder working group under the proposed Coastal Forum, to develop global guidance on the conservation, wise use and management of sustainable “Working Coastal Habitats”, in particular elaborating strategies and models for economic development that maintain the

ecological character and functionality of such habitats to the benefit of local communities and migratory species, and to submit this draft guidance for consideration at the Ramsar COP14;

- 1.c CMS COP12 resolution (UNEP/CMS 24.4.9) on promoting marine protected area networks in the ASEAN Region calls upon Parties and range states to continue the development of transboundary area-based conservation measures, promote marine protected area networks and connectivity that will improve the identification and governance of important sites for migratory species, and urges Parties and Non-Parties to collaborate with existing region-wide networks that promote the establishment of marine protected area networks, especially in the ASEAN Region.

In line with this resolution, and related CMS resolutions on management of ecological networks, the Philippines continued to exercise its role in advancing the objectives of the CMS under the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reef, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF). The Coral Triangle Initiative is a regional cooperation of six-member countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste) with shared jurisdiction over the most diverse marine eco-region in the world. The Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape spanning three countries- Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines, serves as a geographic focus for investments, actions, conservation and climate change related results under the CTI-CFF Regional Plan of Action (RPOA). The Philippine initiatives to advance the implementation of the marine protected area network the Sulu-Sulawesi seascape are as follows:

- i. Organized a tri-national (Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia) workshop on December 2017 on the establishment of Marine Turtle Protected area network, monitoring, controlling and surveillance in the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion. The workshop established the technical working group to facilitate the work needed for setting up the coordination mechanisms for establishing and management of MPA Networks for marine turtles, including whale shark. The meeting also tackled the development of a mechanism for communication and information sharing among law enforcements agencies within and cross national borders;
- ii. In 3-6 July 2018, the Philippines convened the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape Convergence Meeting to pursue the vision of a Transboundary Marine Protected Area Network to protect marine turtles among other charismatic marine wildlife in interconnected critical habitats across Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The vision is an off shoot of the then Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion project (2006-2016). The meeting successfully agreed on a) transboundary seascape coordination mechanisms for MPA Networks for marine turtles and whale sharks base on scientific data on the critical range of these species within the Sulu-Sulawesi with the vision that the network may expand outside the Sulu-Sulawesi region) b) updated draft "Sub-Regional Plan for Managing Transboundary Fisheries in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas"; and c) developed the road map for the establishment of Marine turtle and Whale shark Marine Protected Area network. The meeting also identified opportunities for potential regional synergies in managing Illegal Unregulated, Unreported Fishing, Bycatch mitigation for sea turtles and sharks, addressing illegal trade; Blue carbon, Whale shark studies, management of marine debris, resource mobilization, among others.

The meeting noted the newly established marine turtle protected area within the Philippines, as its part of the proposed transboundary Marine Turtle Protected Area. These are: Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary, Tubbataha Reefs National Park and El Nido-Taytay Marine Resources Protected Area.

- 1.d In 13-14 August 2018, in Singapore, the Philippines reported to the 20<sup>th</sup> Governing Board Meeting of the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity on the significant results of the CMS COP12 held for the first time in the ASEAN Region. The report highlighted the adoption of resolutions which are relevant to the key programs of the ACB such as the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Key Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the ASEAN Region and the designation and support to the management of ASEAN Heritage Parks which includes sites relevant to migratory species conservation. The report also highlighted the need for more dynamic participation of the ASEAN region in the conservation of migratory species, including follow-up with ASEAN Member Countries to their possible accession to the Convention;
- 1.e. The DENR- Philippines convened on July 11-12, 2018, the 13<sup>th</sup> Joint Management Committee Meeting of the Philippines – Malaysia Bilateral Cooperation for the management of the Turtle Island Heritage Protected Area (TIPHA), a transboundary protected area recognized to be the largest rookery of green turtles in Southeast-Asia. The Turtles Island within the Philippine Territory (nationally designated as Turtle islands Wildlife Sanctuary) is a Marine Turtle Network Site under the IOSEA MoU. The meeting agreed on resolutions to address the illegal trade in marine turtle eggs which include *inter alia*, enhancing border controls to monitor illegal trade, biodiversity-friendly livelihoods, and promotion of eco-tourism (Philippine side). Malaysia reported developments in their efforts on the reduction of marine turtle by-catch in fisheries through the adoption of marine turtle excluder device and adjustments in line fishing using circular hooks instead of “J” hooks. The meeting also agreed to conduct further investigation on impact of light pollution to marine turtles (adult and hatchlings) from stationary gill net using light. The meeting also agreed to endorse the designation of the TIHPA as ASEAN Heritage Park under the ACB to gather additional support for its management.
- 1.f. In pursuit of the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2011-2015) of 2004, the China and ASEAN Member States (AMS) Forestry cooperation was established and has progressed significantly in recent years. The Cooperation intends to build partnership in the field of wildlife conservation. In order to promote China-ASEAN cooperation in wildlife conservation, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration of China, convened on 18-23 on June 2018 the China-ASEAN wildlife conservation information exchange and workshop among wildlife conservation officials of relevant AMS agencies to strengthen cross-national relations between wildlife conservation professionals and explored possible future cooperation in wildlife conservation. This workshop provided opportunity for the Philippines to articulate the conservation of migratory species conservation as an avenue for building cross national cooperation being a globally shared resource and in which the ASEAN Member States and China have common interest as manifested in their national wildlife policies. The Philippines elaborated the ongoing bilateral transboundary cooperation between the Philippines and Malaysia for the protection of marine turtles in the Turtle Islands Heritage Protected Area, a Marine Turtle Network Site, under the auspices of the MOU on the Conservation of Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean, as a concrete model for collaborative management for shared wildlife species such as marine turtles in the Region. The Eastasian-Australasian Flyway Partnership is also a strong platform where China can broaden its intents to increase collaborative activities on wildlife conservation with countries of the ASEAN. Related to this, the Philippines continue to promote the conservation of migratory species as an avenue for collaboration in the on- going consultations for the development of Philippines-China bilateral cooperation and on the development of the ASEAN-China code of conduct in the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea.

- 1.g. On 27-30 November 2018, the Philippines through the DENR, in collaboration with Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) will be hosting for the second time the East Asia Seas Congress in Cebu City. The congress on its sixth series of triennial ocean conferences aims to promote regional actions that respond to the global ocean agenda as contained under Goal 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The congress shall tackle a broad range of marine issues that is most pressing to the region and that directly addresses migratory species and their habitats such as establishment of marine protected area and networks, marine pollution, biodiversity and coastal management, and opportunities for synergies, and new tools and approaches to manage the marine environment.
- 1.h The Philippines remains active as member to the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership as an avenue for interaction and collaboration to promote the objective of the Convention especially, among the ASEAN Member countries (which are members of the Partnership). The Philippines is participating to advance the management of flyway networks in East Asia currently undertaken through the ASEAN Flyway Network Project being coordination with the ACB and Singapore;
- 2. National level initiatives:**
- 2.a Sought a national legislation regulating the catching, sale, Purchase, possession, transportation importation and exportation of all sharks, rays, chimaeras;
- 2.b Initiated the development of a national policy on marine wildlife interaction together with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Tourism and in consultation with Marine wildlife experts, taking into consideration the technical guidance from the CMS on wildlife tourism;
- 2.c The 2nd Philippine Environment Summit with the theme “Mainstreaming Innovations for Sustainable Development” was held last February 20-22, 2018 in Cebu City, Philippines. Over one thousand participants representing the government, academe, private and non-government, and media attended the event. The Philippine government invited Mr. Bradnee Chambers, Executive Secretary of UNCMS, as one of the plenary speakers to the event where he gave an overview of the impacts of climate change on migratory species, CMS activities and policy developments on Climate Change and on the development of a Climate Resilient Network for the East- Asia – Australasia Flyway;
- 2.d. In furtherance of the Whale shark concerted action plan adopted during the CMS COP12, the DENR executed a Memorandum of Agreement with two local NGOs: The Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines and the Large Marine Vertebrates (LAMAVE) for the two organizations to assist in facilitating the implementation of the action plan;
- 2.e. The DENR continue to engage the business sector in the conservation of marine turtles i.e. management of hatcheries and protection of nests and nesting beaches adjacent to their properties;
- 2.f The conservation of migratory species is part of the Philippines Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The process of mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in local governance is a key conservation approach that benefits migratory species through designation and protection of locally managed marine protected areas/sanctuaries, and critical habitats for migratory species.

The Philippines is privileged to take, more than ever, a more substantial role in advancing the cause of the CMS as COP President. We shall take opportunity of the momentum, the national interest and support on migratory species conservation generated at the conclusion of the CMS COP12 to carry out the task of the COP Presidency, especially within our reach in South East Asia and within the bounds of our resources. We are glad to continue to work with the Secretariat and to report the outcomes in the succeeding standing committee meeting.