

Thank you Chair, for the opportunity to speak to this item.

The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the IWC have many areas of common interest. As you can read in the opening statement that we submitted on behalf of CMS and its cetacean-related regional daughter Agreements, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, the Convention currently covers 16 cetacean species on Appendix I, and 44 on Appendix II. Many work streams within the CMS and its daughter Agreements relate to issues the IWC has also an interest in.

Examples of topics in which we have a common interest include threats like climate change, marine debris and ship strikes. In the meetings last week some concrete options for collaboration were discussed and the recommendations endorsed by the Commission. We are very pleased to be moving forward jointly on issues relating to bycatch and the development of guidance on best practice strandings responses and whale watching.

The 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS, in November 2014, adopted many resolutions of relevance to cetacean conservation. Details are contained in our opening statement. Some of these resolutions specifically reference the work of the IWC and the desire of our Parties, many of which are also represented in the IWC, for our organizations to collaborate on topics of mutual interest. At this Conference, the more than 120 Parties to CMS made some bold steps, showing their modern and science-based approach to conserving the species the Convention is addressing. I would like to highlight Resolution 11.22 on **Live Captures of Cetaceans from the Wild for Commercial Purposes**, which addresses issues of capture, transfer and import of live cetaceans. Resolution 11.23 on **Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture** is the first time an intergovernmental body recognized the increasing evidence that populations of some species are better delineated by cultural behaviour than genetic diversity or geographic isolation. This presents an even greater challenge for effective conservation strategies. In order to investigate this further and provide solid advice to the Parties, an expert group was established to consider the case for species of all taxonomic groups covered by CMS, including of course cetaceans.

Resolution 11.29 on **Sustainable Boat-Based Marine Wildlife Watching** is the basis for our planned collaboration regarding the Whale Watching Handbook. It establishes basic principles to adhere to when adopting measures to promote ecologically sustainable wildlife watching, fully in line with the recommendations made by the IWC. It also requests the CMS Scientific Council to develop guidelines for the different taxonomic groups CMS deals with, including cetaceans. In order not to duplicate efforts and to make the most effective use of the resources available, developing joint guidance for this species group is an opportunity we are very pleased about.

Another area of joint interest is the threat from anthropogenic sound. You will be interested to know that CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS are in the process of finalizing **CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessments for Marine Noise-generating Activities**. These Guidelines will shortly undergo a second and final round of consultations with the Parties and scientific advisory bodies to these three treaties, and will be presented for adoption to the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS in October 2017.

Mr Chair, dear Commissioners, the regional Agreement for small cetacean conservation in northern and western Europe, ASCOBANS, has held its 8th Meeting of the Parties less than two months ago. Many progressive resolutions on both well-known and emerging threats to cetaceans were passed, including issues such as bycatch, underwater munitions, ocean energy, and management of cumulative impacts in the marine environment. You can find details in the already-mentioned joint opening statement of the CMS Family of Agreements. I would like to highlight just a couple of the decisions made, as they relate to the discussions here in the last few days.

The Scientific Committee of IWC has repeated its grave concern about the status of the Baltic harbour porpoise and data released at the end of 2015 gave much needed insights into population size and distribution, enabling ASCOBANS - as the competent regional treaty for the conservation of this species - to prepare an updated version of the **Recovery Plan for the Baltic Harbour Porpoise**, which was adopted through ASCOBANS Resolution 8.3. The Jastarnia Plan, as it is commonly called, provides a comprehensive framework for the urgent regional action needed to allow this depleted population to recover, and we invite both ASCOBANS Parties and non-Party Range States in the Baltic Sea region to implement it and the neighbouring Western Baltic Conservation Plan and participate in the fora established to support this.

ASCOBANS Resolution 8.10 on **Small Cetacean Stranding Response** encourages the establishment of effective national strandings response networks, and recommends that updated necropsy protocols and best practice guidelines for stranding responses and necropsies be developed collaboratively with the IWC, ACCOBAMS and the European Cetacean Society. We were very pleased that this call for collaboration was heard by the IWC and our request to have ASCOBANS represented on the newly established Expert Panel was favourably received.

This meeting has endorsed the proposal for a Bycatch Initiative under the IWC. The incidental mortality of cetaceans, both large and small, related to fishing activities is enormous, and constitutes one of the most severe threats. As many of you will be aware, CMS, ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS have all worked on this issue for many years, including through dedicated working groups and direct engagement with fisheries fora, and have considerable expertise to offer. We are therefore looking forward to engaging with the IWC on work relating to this subject, and are pleased that the Commission endorsed the participation of experts active in our fora in the newly established standing working group and Expert Panel.

Mr Chair, dear Commissioners, the threats to cetaceans in the modern world require “all hands on deck”. As international organizations we have to make full use of synergies. It is my pleasure to report that the three Secretariats serving the IWC, CMS/ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS are committed to working together wherever feasible. From our side, we very much appreciate the open and constructive exchanges which have now become a regular feature of our work.

Our organizations have a common aim: healthy populations of whales, dolphins and porpoises. We must continue to make use of every opportunity to work together and build on our respective achievements to realize this.