



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



Bradnee Chambers – Opening Address – ACCOBAMS MOP6

Your Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco, dear President of the Bureau Ms Driouich, dear Executive Secretary Florence Descroix-Comanducci, distinguishes delegates,

It is an honour for me to address all of you on behalf of the extended CMS Family at the opening of this Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Seas, Mediterranean and Contiguous Atlantic Area. This gathering presents a moment to reflect upon the many successes of the past 20 years, and to set in motion future implementation of the ACCOBAMS mission to conserve whales, dolphins and porpoises.

This is a pivotal time for many of the species listed under ACCOBAMS. Sadly, thanks to many human activities, the life of cetaceans is a daily fight to survive. For two decades, ACCOBAMS has been a strong force to help them. Also at this 6th Meeting of the Parties, the proposed resolutions in front of you at this meeting illustrate the range of threats these animals have to struggle with: interactions with fisheries, anthropogenic noise, ship strikes, not-so-well managed whale watching activities, to name but a few. These underwater threats are multiple, cumulative and simultaneous, and demand a response.

The proposed resolutions focus on the ACCOBAMS area, but they address broad, global problems. Threats such as pollution alter the lives of migratory species in every ocean and sea, on mountains and in forests, in the desert or in the sky. Actions agreed by Parties to ACCOBAMS will not only help countries focus their efforts in the ACCOBAMS region, but will help to highlight these issues on a wider scale, and emphasize that tackling them will require global cooperation and collaboration. Together, these proposed decisions can help ensure rich, thriving oceans and seas.

In grappling with these challenges, Parties to ACCOBAMS can underline the importance of international conservation instruments such as ACCOBAMS and CMS. Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as CMS, ACCOBAMS, or your sister Agreement in the north, ASCOBANS, are vital in stimulating and fostering this much needed collaboration amongst countries to tackle the common environmental problems – they are the lifeblood of species conservation. In striving to protect animals in international waters from a range of risks, ACCOBAMS in many ways represents the highest aims of the CMS Family: to conserve migratory species of wild animals in places and ways that individual States could not.

As the Earth's population continues to grow, these multifaceted challenges will not vanish. If anything the detrimental human impacts on our planet and its oceans are likely to intensify unless we collectively move towards a more sustainable path, one which ensures that we conserve and sustainably use the world's oceans and seas and helps to protect and restore marine biodiversity proactively. In moving to do so, ACCOBAMS and the actions agreed and implemented by its Parties, play an important and active part in a global movement underway, which recognizes and alleviates the results of human actions on the natural world – the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The work of CMS, ACCOBAMS and the other instruments in the CMS Family present many opportunities for close collaboration and mutual reinforcement of our common aims. For both CMS and ASCOBANS, cooperation with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat all these years has been a real pleasure. We have planned and strategized together, learned from each other, and worked closely on many issues. Examples of this include for example the Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBANS and ASCOBANS, or the advice CMS received from ACCOBAMS in our efforts to develop a review mechanism for the Convention.

In 2014, Parties to CMS adopted the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, which covers the period 2015-2023. This is not a Strategic Plan for CMS alone, but is intended for migratory species in general. The Strategic Plan for Migratory Species is based on the Aichi Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and relates directly to the work of other biodiversity-related MEAs, as well as goals 14 and 15 of the Sustainable Development Goals, addressing biodiversity in the oceans and on land. ACCOBAMS, like the other instruments of the CMS Family, is warmly encouraged to participate in the process especially of fully developing the Companion Volume, which draws upon existing tools under other CMS instruments and identifies areas of possible cooperation.

We cherish this productive relationship, and I am confident that both Secretariats will continue to do whatever it takes to make it flourish even more. In fact, even our host for this meeting and host of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the Principality of Monaco, with their commitment, advice and generous support for the work undertaken in both frameworks, helps to strengthen and reinforce the synergies and common interests of CMS and ACCOBAMS. We treasure this relationship with the Principality, and are most grateful for all their support as a real champion for marine species conservation.

I applaud the work of ACCOBAMS Parties, the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, and especially the Government of Monaco as hosts of this meeting, and wish you all a productive few days to come in this beautiful part of the world. Congratulations on your anniversary! Thank you.