

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Nineteenth meeting of the Animals Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 18-21 August 2003

Review of significant trade in specimens of Appendix-II species  
(Resolution Conf. 12.8 and Decision 12.75)

CONSERVATION OF SAIGA TATARICA

1. This document has been prepared by the United States of America.
2. Populations of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*) have declined seriously in recent years due to excessive legal harvest, poaching and illegal trade, habitat degradation, and other factors. To address this conservation problem, CITES included the saiga in the review of significant trade in specimens of Appendix-II species, which culminated in the recommendation at the 45th meeting of the Standing Committee (Paris, June 2001) that trade of saiga from Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation be suspended.
3. Both Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation took the praiseworthy step of voluntarily suspending exports of specimens of saiga. Despite this step, populations have continued to decline, in some areas precipitously.
4. To further address this problem, an international workshop on saiga conservation was convened in May 2002 in Elista, Kalmykia, Russian Federation. The workshop was convened at the initiative of and was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Kalmykia of the Russian Federation. The Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia assisted in bringing the Workshop to fruition. The workshop was held under the auspices of both CITES and the Convention on Migratory Species, and was sponsored financially by a number of organizations, including Conservation Force, IUCN, the Large Herbivore Initiative of WWF, the Safari Club of Houston, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
5. The workshop achieved unprecedented cooperation among the five range States that participated, those being Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. A draft Action Plan concerning conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*) was prepared, as was a Memorandum of Understanding among four of the range States. The three annexes to this document are products of the workshop.
6. The draft Action Plan identifies an ongoing role for CITES in the conservation and recovery of saiga. The Animals Committee is the proper technical committee to consider these recommendations, as well as what additional action may be taken under the Review of Significant Trade, including a focus on consuming as well as producing countries.
7. The United States of America requests the Animals Committee to consider the attached documents in the context of the Review of Significant Trade, with the goal of determining what additional actions CITES can take to help the saiga recover.



Resolution of the international workshop on saiga conservation

1. An international workshop on saiga conservation convened at the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Kalmykia, was held in Elista, Kalmykia's capital, May 5-10, 2002.
2. The workshop was made possible by the combined efforts of the Committee for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia in the Republic of Kalmykia; Caspian Programme of ISAR; the Russian Committee for the UNESCO Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), and the financial support of international and national donors (Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS); the Species Survival Commission of the World Conservation Union (IUCN/SSC); World Wide Fund for Nature; Large Herbivore Initiative of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF/LHI); Royal Netherlands Embassy in the Russian Federation; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Conservation Force, USA; Safari Club, Houston; "Kalmneft" Open Joint-Stock Company; "Kalmtatneft" Open Joint-Stock Company; Russian Joint-Stock Company "Rosneftegazstroj". Workshop participants acknowledged the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Kalmykia in hosting such an important international workshop and expressed their gratitude to all sponsors of the workshop, members of Organizing Committee and facilitators who made valuable input in the workshop's success.
3. More than 90 specialists took part in the workshop, including: representatives of the five range states (Russian Federation, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Mongolia); representatives of international organizations responsible for migratory species protection and international trade in rare and endangered species of wild flora and fauna; governmental and non-governmental nature conservation organizations; other organizations and agencies.
4. At plenary and thematic sessions the workshop participants discussed causes of a decrease in saiga numbers practically throughout its entire range, except for Mongolia, where there is a separate subspecies (*Saiga tatarica mongolica*) and its strict protection has been ensured in collaboration with the local population. Poaching for horns, which are used in traditional Chinese medicine, has become the main reason for the steep decline in saiga numbers. Besides horns poachers also hunt saigas to obtain meat for sale at local markets. To stop this negative process the CITES Secretariat proposed that the Standing Committee recommends to all Parties that no imports of specimens of this species be accepted from Kazakhstan and Russian Federation. Workshop participants noted the necessity of expanding cooperation on all levels, including with nations importing saiga horns, so as to prevent illegal trade and restore saiga habitat and abundance for future sustainable use and requested the range states delegations at the forthcoming in 2002 CITES COP to discuss usefulness of temporal moratorium on trade of any saiga specimens and take the relevant decision.
5. Besides combating poaching and illegal trade the workshop participants discussed such main topics as monitoring of populations/habitats of saiga; the role of strictly protected natural areas; establishing captive breeding centers for genepool conservation; collaboration with local population; and interregional and international cooperation. Detailed discussions of these issues were carried out at plenary sessions and in small groups where proposals and recommendations for the conservation and sustainable use of saiga were elaborated. These proposals have been added to drafts of the Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan for saiga conservation a preparation and advance distribution to all interested bodies of which were initiated by the Secretariat of CMS. At the plenary session workshop participants approved these drafts together with additions made by six working groups and recommended to relevant authorities of each range state in collaboration with CITES and CMS to sign these documents as soon as possible.
6. Workshop participants with gratitude accepted a proposal of the CMS Secretariat to undertake postings of final versions of Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan to the range states and expressed the hope that it will allow to speed up the process of signing of above documents. Moreover, there was achieved an agreement that CMS and CITES together with range states will take necessary steps to strengthen control of international trade in horns and other products derivable from saiga. Also workshop participants called upon the governments of the range states to increase their efforts towards conservation and restoration of saiga and its habitats including migration corridors; encouraged all stakeholders to contribute to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan which could be the

important inputs in the framework of Agreement on conservation and use of migrating bird and mammal species and their habitats signed by members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1994.

7. Workshop participants wish to suggest that after the entry into effect of the Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan it will be desirable to create an intergovernmental commission which will be responsible for their implementing and for the overall coordination of efforts of all organizations interested in conservation of saiga. Along with this commission workshop participants expressed the necessity to create an international public expert council as an instrument for independent assessment of any projects which could lead to changes in saiga populations and requested Russian MAB Committee to agree upon a process of its forming and terms of references.
8. Workshop participants also noted that the conservation and restoration of saiga and its habitats can contribute to the programs of poverty eradication and sustainable development of range states. The conservation of this endangered species cannot be separated from other national and regional efforts to conserve biodiversity and to combat land degradation as it is addressed by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on Desertification Control (CCD). Accordingly it will be necessary to integrate conservation and sustainable use efforts for saiga and its habitat into the national strategies and action plans required under these instruments and any future Memoranda of Understanding concluded under CMS and CITES auspices.
9. Workshop participants requested national and regional governmental bodies to consider the possibility of creating new protected natural areas (PNA), particularly transboundary to protect migrating saiga herds, and strengthen existing local PNA networks to secure free connections between fragmented sub-populations. In some suitable areas it will be desirable to establish several saiga breeding centers that will be important to conserve its genepool.
10. The workshop participants asked local and national authorities to publicize the workshop results and widely distribute the information on programs aimed to conserve, restore and sustainable use of saiga as the living heritage of the Eurasian steppes which must be maintained for future generations. Workshop participants asked also the Organizing Committee to distribute this Resolution to the range state governments and publish the papers presented at the workshop as a separate volume that should be forwarded to CITES and CMS and other agencies and organizations interested in conservation, restoration and sustainable use of saiga.
11. Workshop participants requested experts from range states to conduct analysis of long-term observations on changes in ecology and biology of saiga which could be used for publishing in the Journal "Arid Ecosystems" and for preparing a set of teaching aids.
12. Workshop participants requested the Government of Republic of Kalmykia to continue its efforts to promote a cooperation among all parties concerned with saiga conservation. In this connection it will be important to expand the Wild Animals Conservation Center of Republic of Kalmykia and to use it as a base for training of local and visiting students. It will be also necessary to support the development and utilization of the most up-to-date technologies for conducting counts and other studies on ecology of saiga, and the establishing relevant database to promote information exchange among the saiga range states and with the Secretariats of CMS, CITES and other agencies. Workshop participants invited all national and international governmental institutions (including the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies) inside as well as outside saiga range to implement the Action Plan and to integrate it into their programs and activities.

**Draft Action Plan concerning conservation, restoration and sustainable use  
of the Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)**

Saiga antelope are unique nomadic animals that, during their long evolution, became well adapted to the harsh and unpredictable conditions of the dry steppes and semi-deserts of Eurasia. In spite of their rather short life span they have an extremely high reproductive rate. This makes the populations capable of quick recovery from periodic high mortality rates induced by changes in habitat conditions.

At the present time, the greatest threat to the Saiga antelope is not the extremes of nature, but excessive and unsustainable harvesting due to a large demand for meat and a particularly high demand for horns that are very valued in traditional Chinese medicine. Brought back from the brink of extinction in the early 1900s, the Saiga antelope has recovered only to find itself under serious threat once again.

The following Action Plan includes a comprehensive set of activities designed to stop the further decline of one of the two subspecies of Saiga antelope - *Saiga tatarica tatarica* - and restore its numbers to ecologically and biologically optimal levels throughout its range.

*S. t. tatarica* inhabits the vast plains of the Central Asia and Pre-Caspian region. Three populations of *S. t. tatarica* are known in Central Asia - the Ural, Ust'-Urt and Betpak-Dala, and one (European population) - in the Pre-Caspian region. Some herds from the Ust'-Urt population, mostly inhabiting Kazakhstan, could migrate to adjacent territories of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

During the period between 1980-1994 the total numbers of *S. t. tatarica* fluctuated between 670,000 - 1,251,000 animals; the European population - from 142,000 to 430,000 animals; the Ural population - from 40,000 to 298,000 animals; the Ust'-Urt population - 140,000 to 265,000 animals; and the Betpak-Dala population - 250,000 to 510,000 animals. All four populations show dramatic population declines from 1998 onwards. For example, the annual rate of decline for the total *S. t. tatarica* population in 1998-1999 was about 35 percent. In 1999-2000 it became even higher - up to 56 percent.

The Betpak-Dala population has suffered particularly heavy declines, with the current population numbers being 4 percent of the 1980-90 population estimate. The Ust'-Urt population is also declining rapidly. In the European population an aerial survey made in May 2001 in the territory of Kalmykia yielded an estimate of only 17,800 animals (15-20 percent of their 1980s level) (Milner-Gulland *et al.*, 2001).

The main habitats of *S. t. tatarica* are the plains in dry steppe and semi-desert natural zones of Eurasia. Animals avoid any areas with dense bushes and thickets along water bodies, but could use them as a shelter during severe winters, particularly in days with strong wind. During the dry season animals could visit irrigated crop fields for feeding.

Two different types of migrations have been observed: intraseasonal and interseasonal. The last are rather regular and take place in spring and autumn. Usually they have a south-north direction. Their length depends on the weather and forage conditions. Usually for the European population the length of such migrations is about 150-300 km; for the Betpak-Dala population it is 600-1200 km; for the Ust'-Urt population it is 300-600 km; and for the Ural population it is 200-300 km.

There is much evidence that all *S. t. tatarica* populations have suffered from poaching, illegal trade, habitat degradation and disturbance. Indirect threats include fragmentation of range due to agriculture development, irrigation and road construction. Droughts or severe winters, diseases and predation pressure from wolves can also act as factors threatening the Saiga populations (Bekenov *et al.*, 1998). However these factors are unlikely to be major causes of the declines.

The most likely explanation of the dramatic recent declines is severe and ongoing poaching pressure. As only males bear horns, poaching has led to a dramatic drop in the proportion of adult males in the population. Long distance migrations may make *S. t. tatarica* even more vulnerable to poaching as they move from territories where they are protected to less secure areas.

A dramatic decline in livestock numbers beginning from 1992 has certainly increased the interest in Saiga as a source of meat. Indeed, its meat can now be bought on food markets in some cities and small human settlements.

There was also an increase in illegal trade in Saiga horns observed in the last years of the Soviet Union's existence, when the state monopoly on international trade was dissolved and customs controls became lax. This stimulated a massive illegal hunt for Saiga horns, and their subsequent transportation to the Oriental markets, to be used for medicinal purposes. The fact that the proportion of adult males in Saiga populations has been steadily declining from 1997 makes it plausible that poaching for horns has grown more intense as well.

Up to now *S. t. tatarica* has been protected as a hunting animal in all Range States. Population assessments, conducted by local hunting departments, have provided the basis for managing hunting such as when to open the hunting season and its length. In the former Soviet Union (before the 1950s) a hunting ban was applied for many years. It helped to increase Saiga antelope numbers and provided the basis for subsequent commercial harvesting under the State control. Due to a drastic decline of populations the hunting ban was re-instituted recently in Kalmykia and Kazakhstan.

International concern about the plight of the Saiga antelope was first raised in 1995 (Chan *et al.*, 1995; New Scientist, 1995). The species was listed as Vulnerable on the 1996 IUCN Red List, with the Mongolian sub-species *S. t. mongolica* listed as Endangered (Baillie & Groombridge, 1996). The status of the species as a whole, and of the nominate sub-species, was revised to Lower Risk (conservation dependent) for the 2000 IUCN Red List because there was no evidence for declines in Kazakhstan (Hilton-Taylor, 2000). However, the IUCN-SSC Antelope Action Plan (Mallon & Kingswood, 2001) lists the species now as Endangered. In 2002, its status has been upgraded to Critically Endangered based on severe declines documented by A. Lushchekina and E.J. Milner-Gulland (Mallon, 2002).

Heightened international awareness about the plight of the species led to a CITES Appendix-II listing in 1995, instituting controls over international trade in live animals, horns and other specimens of Saiga, and which is allowed only in as much as trade is not detrimental to the survival of the species. Because of concerns over the sustainability of the trade, CITES Parties decided in 2001 to recommend to suspend imports of *S. tatarica* from the two main Range States, the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, until a regional conservation strategy for the species was in place, and it can be scientifically justified that exports will not be detrimental to the survival of the species. Since Kazakhstan's accession in 2000, all of the *S. t. tatarica* Range States are now CITES Parties with the exception of Turkmenistan. Among Range States, only Uzbekistan is a Party to the Convention on Migratory Species.

## References

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Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
1. Restore populations of Saiga Antelope (SA) to ecologically and biologically appropriate levels throughout its range	1. Assess the feasibility to restore SA populations to appropriate levels in different parts of its range, and identify challenges and opportunities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collect available information on past quantitative distribution of SA within its range and analyse collected data on SA numbers in different parts of its range.</li> <li>2. Establish “appropriate” levels of SA populations in the Range States.</li> <li>3. Assess the practical possibilities to increase SA populations in the Range States by determining opportunities, costs, timeframe, stakeholders' involvement, major hurdles and difficulties.</li> <li>4. Develop restoration plans for different SA populations.</li> <li>5. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 4.</li> </ol>	Range States	CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat		
	2. Establish and adopt a standardised monitoring programme that will allow to regularly census SA populations in the Range States.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review different census techniques, and adopt ‘best practice’ methodologies for reliable counting of SA populations.</li> <li>2. Identify appropriate sample sizes, timing, and frequency of counts to provide reliable base line data for extrapolation and analysis of evolution of SA populations.</li> <li>3. Provide training in standard census techniques as appropriate.</li> <li>4. Ensure that standardised techniques are used in all Range States for comparison and joint analysis.</li> <li>5. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 4.</li> </ol>	Range States	CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat		

Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
	3. Determine and survey key areas where SA populations occur, using standardised census techniques.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct aerial and ground surveys to determine changes of the winter and summer territories of SA with emphasis on lambing, rutting and migration areas.</li> <li>2. Collect base line data on SA populations in a standardised manner, and monitor the changes annually or at agreed frequencies.</li> <li>3. Analyse the status of SA populations over time and develop recommendations to manage them as necessary.</li> <li>4. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 3 for at least five consecutive years.</li> </ol>	Range States	CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat		
	4. Assess the current sex/age ratio and determine the reproduction success in SA populations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Count regularly sex/age ratio in SA populations, and establish base line data to determine the evolution of sex ratio, reproduction success and age structure.</li> <li>2. Undertake field investigations of SA breeding biology and ecology with use of techniques that cause minimal harm to SA.</li> <li>3. Identify the factors that prevent reaching the biologically appropriate sex/age ratio in SA populations in different parts of its range.</li> <li>4. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 3.</li> </ol>	Range States	CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat		



Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
	5. Assess the impacts of natural threats to SA populations.	<p>1. Collect data on and assess long-term impacts of climate change, diseases and other natural threats to SA populations in different parts of its range.</p> <p>2. Survey predator numbers using standardised census techniques in areas currently inhabited by SA populations.</p> <p>3. Determine the impact of predators on SA populations in the Range States in different seasons, under different forms of predator control, and on different SA age classes, and identify 'best practices' for predator management.</p> <p>4. Use an ecosystem-based approach to develop appropriate measures to control diseases and to manage predators and other wild species sharing habitats with SA to enhance their co-function in the ecosystem.</p> <p>5. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 4.</p>	Range States	<p>CMS</p> <p>CITES</p> <p>WWF-International</p> <p>Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat</p>		

Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
	6. Assess the impacts of human induced threats on SA populations.	<p>1. Collect and assess long-term data on impacts of farming and agriculture, industrial development, road and channel construction, and other human induced factors in different parts of the SA range.</p> <p>2. Prepare questionnaire and interview local people to obtain basic information on socio-economics of poaching and illegal trade, to identify incentives and disincentives for poaching, and attitudes regarding governmental SA conservation and antipoaching activities.</p> <p>3. Develop antipoaching programmes, measures to control illegal trade, and law enforcement mechanisms and test their efficiency in different circumstances and parts of the SA range.</p> <p>4. Develop a confiscation policy for SA products and ensure that benefits of retained or auctioned seized products are reinvested in SA conservation.</p> <p>5. Review and where necessary strengthen legal and institutional measures concerning SA protection, control of poaching and illegal trade.</p> <p>6. Strengthen the system for protection SA populations and the local participation in antipoaching efforts.</p> <p>7. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 6.</p>	Range States	<p>CMS</p> <p>CITES</p> <p>WWF-International</p> <p>Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat</p>		

Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
	<p>7. Examine the role of <i>ex situ</i> conservation and captivity breeding centres (CBC) in enhancing wild SA populations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collect and analyse available information on the role of existing CBC in <i>ex situ</i> conservation of SA.</li> <li>2. Conduct experiments to develop artificial insemination of SA females kept in CBC.</li> <li>3. Assess the need for and the costs of establishing new and/or maintaining existing CBC in the Range States.</li> <li>4. Establish SA populations in captivity representing different gene pools.</li> <li>5. Prepare SA groups (particularly males) born in CBC for release in natural habitats pursuant to the IUCN Reintroduction Guidelines.</li> <li>6. Determine the technical feasibility, need and economic viability of commercial SA farming (game ranching) in natural or semi-natural conditions to produce live animals, horns, skins, and meat, and to provide economic benefits for local people.</li> <li>7. Prepare special syllabuses for CBC to train future SA farmers and persons planning to work in CBC.</li> <li>8. Develop additional national legal instruments to permit captive breeding and farming of SA including the collection of live animals from natural habitats for this purpose.</li> <li>9. Prepare information on SA biology for ecological education and ecotourists visiting CBC.</li> <li>10. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 9.</li> </ol>	<p>Range States</p>	<p>CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat</p>		

Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
2. Restore range and habitats of SA to ecologically and biologically optimal levels	1. Collect available information on suitable habitats used by SA and identify the spatial structure of its range.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyse information on habitats of SA and the spatial structure of its former and current range.</li> <li>2. Use GIS and modern technologies to assess key habitats and their carrying capacity, and to map habitats currently used by SA.</li> <li>3. Obtain financial and technical support to apply modern technology to habitat studies.</li> </ol>	Range States	CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat		
	2. Analyse past and present preferences in use of habitats by SA in different seasons.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify key features, including food and shelter requirements, of past and present habitats of SA.</li> <li>2. Conduct experiments in restoring SA habitats and in increasing their carrying capacity.</li> <li>3. Elaborate conservation and restoration plans for the former SA range, and ensure that suitable migratory ecological corridors are established to connect existing SA populations.</li> <li>4. Develop a programme for involving local people living on and using land where SA occur to improve land management and cohabitation between SA and people.</li> <li>5. Assess the economic and ecological feasibility to maintain both SA and livestock in SA habitats, and develop recommendations for local communities.</li> <li>6. Analyse and if necessary strengthen laws and institutions in the Range States concerning protection and restoration of SA habitats.</li> <li>7. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 6.</li> </ol>	Range States	CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat		

	<p>3. Examine the existing network of Protected Areas (PA), and evaluate its effectiveness in protecting SA habitats and populations.</p>	<p>1. Collect and analyse available information and elaborate proposals to improve PA networks in the Range States for restoring habitats and SA numbers.</p> <p>2. Prepare information on SA biology to be used for ecological education and for ecotourists visiting PA.</p> <p>3. Strengthen the involvement of different stakeholders in SA conservation, restoration and sustainable use, as well as in PA management, by creating public councils for each PA within the SA range.</p> <p>4. Establish local student volunteer teams for strengthening conservation of nature and SA within and around each PA within the SA range.</p> <p>5. Organise and convene local and international Summer youth camps in different parts of the SA range aimed to help PA in implementing their SA conservation programs.</p> <p>6. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 5.</p>	<p>Range States</p>	<p>CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat</p>		
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Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
3. Enhance transboundary and international co-operation for conservation and sustainable use of SA.	1. Develop a coherent regional conservation and management strategy for SA and monitor its implementation in the Range States.	<p>1. Ensure the regional implementation of the MoU and of the Action Plan.</p> <p>2. Elaborate national Action Plans and improve communication between the Range States on SA conservation and management.</p> <p>3. Develop pilot SA conservation projects in the Range States to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Action Plan, as well as the costs of different activities, and adapt the national Action Plans as necessary.</p> <p>4. Integrate SA conservation, restoration and sustainable use programmes into different economic sectors through legal and policy instruments regarding biodiversity conservation and/or rural development.</p> <p>5. Strengthen co-operation between national state authorities, political decision makers, economic sectors, and local communities on land-uses that are not harmful to SA.</p> <p>6. Improve legal and economic mechanisms for SA conservation, restoration and sustainable use, and identify incentives to enhance conservation efforts by and support from local people.</p> <p>7. In collaboration with the private sector encourage the establishment of several SA breeding farms (or ranches) to achieve conservation, restoration and sustainable use of SA resources.</p> <p>8. Combine financial and technical resources of the Range States to implement the Action Plan and undertake co-ordinated joint activities to obtain funds from different sources.</p>	Range States	<p>CMS</p> <p>CITES</p> <p>WWF-International</p> <p>Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat</p>		

Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
	<p>2. Increase public awareness and involvement in SA conservation programs and assess the behaviour and the attitude of local people towards SA over time.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct regular questionnaire surveys to collect information on the attitude of local people towards SA, and changes over time, in different parts of the SA range.</li> <li>2. Involve mass-media (regional, national, local level) in addressing SA conservation, restoration and sustainable use, and in explaining the relevant challenges.</li> <li>3. Involve regional specialists in the Range States in awareness and educational programmes aimed at local people, covering different aspects of the Action Plan.</li> <li>4. Create and regularly update a web-site about SA conservation, restoration and sustainable use.</li> <li>5. Produce CDs, video and TV films on SA conservation, restoration and sustainable use for national and international audiences, and for education and training purposes.</li> <li>6. Organise and convene annual national festivals "SA is our living heritage" in each the Range State.</li> <li>7. Conduct projects to assess optimal sharing social and economic values of SA conservation and trade in SA products (including disposal of confiscated goods) with local people.</li> <li>8. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 7.</li> </ol>	Range States	<p>CMS CITES WWF-International Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat</p>		

Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
	3. Enhance international co-operation.	<p>1. Consider establishing an intergovernmental commission for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of SA and its habitats in order to generally co-ordinate and realise the Action Plan.</p> <p>2. Designate national co-ordinators responsible for liaison with counterparts in other Range States and with co-operating organisations, and improve exchange of information and technical expertise on SA conservation, restoration and sustainable use.</p> <p>3. Establish public councils in the Range States for evaluation of regional and interregional projects dealing with SA conservation, restoration and sustainable use.</p> <p>4. Undertake activities to improve compliance with CITES provisions in the Range States as appropriate.</p> <p>5. Encourage full compliance by the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan with CITES recommendations regarding the conservation of and trade in SA as formulated under the Review of Significant Trade.</p> <p>6. Conduct CITES/CMS supported missions to selected Range States and countries consuming SA products.</p> <p>7. Encourage collaboration between the Range States and Asian SA consumer countries to combat illegal trade, to better control legal trade, and to seek support for the implementation of the Action Plan.</p>	Range States	<p>CMS</p> <p>CITES</p> <p>WWF-International</p> <p>Other international organisations to be consulted by the Range States and the CMS Secretariat</p>		



Objective	Programme	Activity	Responsible	Collaborators	Progress/Results	Further Activities
		<p>8. Develop and implement international projects that contribute to the Objectives of the Action Plan with participation of CITES, CMS, SUI/IUCN, IGF, CIC and others.</p> <p>9. Elaborate manuals for customs officers and inspectors, and develop internationally approved certificates for local SA products in close co-ordination with the relevant CITES authorities.</p> <p>10. Organise regular meetings of SA Range States national co-ordinators and provide technical training for office and management personnel involved in implementing the Action Plan.</p> <p>11. Train fundraisers and elaborate programmes to obtain funds to implement the Action Plan.</p> <p>12. Obtain financial and technical support to undertake Activities 1 to 11.</p>				

**Abbreviations/Acronyms:**

<b>SA</b>	<b>Saiga antelope</b>
<b>CBC</b>	<b>Captive breeding centre</b>
<b>PA</b>	<b>Protected area</b>
<b>GIS</b>	<b>Geographic Information System</b>
<b>CMS</b>	<b>Convention on Migratory Species</b>
<b>CITES</b>	<b>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora</b>
<b>WWF-International</b>	<b>World Wide Fund for Nature</b>
<b>IUCN</b>	<b>World Conservation Union</b>
<b>SUI/IUCN</b>	<b>Sustainable Use Initiative of IUCN</b>
<b>IGF</b>	<b>International Game Foundation</b>
<b>CIC</b>	<b>International Council for Conservation of Game Animals</b>

**DRAFT (19 August 2002)**

**Memorandum of Understanding  
concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the  
Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)**

[*between*

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation,

The Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan,

The State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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

*Assuming* international responsibilities to conserve and sustainably use the Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*) pursuant to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Nairobi, 1992), which has recognized migratory species as a unique globally important component of biodiversity under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) (Bonn, 1979), and that CMS is the CBD lead partner in conserving and sustainably using migratory species over their entire migratory range (Decision VI/20);

*Recalling* that CMS calls for international cooperative action to conserve migratory species, and that CMS Article IV, paragraph 4 encourages Contracting Parties to conclude Agreements - including non-binding administrative agreements such as this one - in respect of any population of migratory species;

*Also recalling* CMS Conference of Parties Resolution 6.4 (Strategic Plan for the Convention on Migratory Species) and operational objective 1.4 (Terrestrial Mammals, other than bats);

*Noting* that the Saiga antelope is included in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (Washington, 1973);

*Concerned* about unsustainable or illegal domestic and international trade in specimens of the species;

*Aware* that the Standing Committee of CITES recommended the development of a regional conservation strategy for the Saiga antelope;

*Aware* that the historical range of the Saiga antelope included the vast plains of the Central Asian and Pre-Caspian region;

*Recognising* that the numbers and the range of the Saiga antelope have declined considerably in recent decades, and that its unfavourable conservation status is of great concern in some parts of its current range;

*Concerned* that poaching and illegal trade in horns and other products, uncontrolled hunting, destruction of habitats, and construction of irrigation channels, roads and other obstacles preventing natural dispersion

and migration are thought to have contributed to recent declines of populations of the Saiga antelope, and that economic hardship, impoverishment of local communities, and poor land use planning are root causes that need to be addressed to preserve the Saiga antelope;

*Noting* the need to improve the protection of the Saiga antelope and its habitats within each Range State and the importance of regional cooperation for its conservation, restoration and sustainable use, including international trade;

*Conscious* that coordinated and concerted national and transboundary actions by the authorities of the Range States responsible for conserving and managing the Saiga antelope, sub-regional, regional and international organizations, trade and business associations, local populations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders would enhance its conservation, recovery and sustainable use, and that of the habitats and ecosystems that are important for its long-term survival;

*Acknowledging* the shared responsibility towards future generations to conserve, restore and sustainably use the Saiga antelope and those habitats and ecosystems that are important for its long-term survival, and the need to undertake national and joint conservation and management activities;

*Confirming* that the Range States of the Saiga antelope have the first responsibility to implement this Memorandum of Understanding; and

*Acknowledging* that a number of organizations will, within their respective mandates and capacities, support the implementation of the Action Plan;

AGREE to collaborate to improve the conservation status of the Saiga antelope throughout its range, and to undertake national and joint activities to conserve, restore and sustainably use the species and those habitats and ecosystems important for its long-term survival, including the measures specified in the Action Plan that is annexed to and forms an integral part of this Memorandum of Understanding.

To this end, and in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation, they shall individually or collectively:

1. Provide effective protection for the Saiga antelope and, where feasible and appropriate, conserve, restore and sustainably use those habitats and ecosystems that are important for its long-term survival;
2. Implement the provisions of the Action Plan that shall aim to (a) restore numbers of the Saiga antelope to ecologically and biologically appropriate levels, (b) restore range and habitats of Saiga antelope to ecologically and biologically appropriate levels and (c) enhance transboundary and international cooperation through *inter alia* a regional conservation and management strategy;
3. Assess regularly the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan. For this purpose, regular meetings can be convened by or in consultation with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS Secretariat), and hosted by and organized in collaboration with one of the undersigned Range States or cooperating organizations;
4. Facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical and legal information to undertake coordinated measures to conserve, restore and sustainably use Saiga antelope, and cooperate with other States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other bodies interested in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan;
5. Designate a competent authority to serve as a focal point for the purpose of implementing this Memorandum of Understanding, and communicate without delay the name and contact details of this authority/person (and any changes thereto) to the CMS Secretariat. For general co-ordination and realization of the Action Plan, the possibility of establishing an intergovernmental commission for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the Saiga antelope and its habitat shall be considered; and

6. Provide to the CMS Secretariat, within [one year][two years] of the date of its entry into effect, a detailed report on the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding by the signatory States. The signatory States in consultation with the CMS Secretariat shall determine the report format. The format will support (a) the informational needs of the signatory States to effectively implement the Memorandum of Understanding and (b) the reporting requirements of the Convention on Migratory Species and CITES where appropriate. The CMS Secretariat shall transmit to each of the Range States and to the cooperating organizations the reports received together with an overview report, which it shall compile on the basis of information at its disposal.

#### Final clauses

7. This Memorandum of Understanding shall be considered an agreement under CMS article IV, paragraph 4, as defined by Resolution 2.6 adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 1988).
8. This Memorandum of Understanding shall take effect immediately after at least [two][three] of the Range States have signed it. It shall remain open for signature indefinitely. The Memorandum shall remain in effect indefinitely subject to the right of any signatory State to terminate its participation by providing one year's written notice to all of the other signatory States. Written notice shall also be provided to the Depositary.
9. This Memorandum of Understanding, including the Action Plan, may be amended by consensus of the signatory States.
10. The original text of this Memorandum of Understanding in the English and Russian languages shall be deposited with the CMS Secretariat, which shall act as the Depositary. In the event of any discrepancies, the English version will be considered definitive.
11. The CMS Secretariat shall provide Secretariat functions as outlined in this Memorandum of Understanding. It may use the services of any reliable organization. The working language for all matters related to this Memorandum of Understanding shall be English and, to the extent practicable, Russian. Signatory States, cooperating organizations involved and the CMS Secretariat shall endeavour to provide any important document in both working languages.
12. The implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan is to be carried out in accordance with the rules of international law and the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

**On behalf of the respective authorities named above:**

Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Representative of the Russian Federation

Representative of Turkmenistan

Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan