



Communiqué

African Lion Range State Meeting

We, delegates of 28 African lion Range States¹, met in Entebbe, Uganda from 30 to 31 May 2016 to discuss the conservation, management and restoration of the lion (*Panthera leo*) and its habitat in Africa.

Recalling Resolution 11.32 of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), requesting Range State Parties and inviting other Range States to:

- (i) review the strengths and weaknesses of the Regional Strategies for Western and Central as well as Eastern and Southern African lion populations prepared in 2006 with the support of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- (ii) with the assistance of the CMS Secretariat consult among range State Parties and other Range States the population status of lions;
- (iii) consult with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on ongoing processes related to lions under CITES; and
- (iv) convene a meeting among Range States and experts to assess and evaluate the implementation of the IUCN Regional Conservation Strategies;

Further recalling Resolution 11.32 of CMS, inviting Range State Parties, subject to the findings of consultations among Range States and relevant stakeholders, to work towards an Appendix II listing proposal to be presented to the 12th Meeting of the CMS COP;

Mindful that at the 17th meeting of the CITES COP (COP17, Johannesburg, September 2016), the conservation, management and listing under CITES of lions will be addressed through, *inter alia*: the report of the Animals Committee on its Periodic Review of *Panthera leo*; Proposal COP17 Prop 4 by Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Togo for all African populations of *Panthera leo* to be transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I; draft resolutions concerning trophy hunting; and draft decisions calling for the development of guidance for achieving non-detriment for the export of African lion hunting trophies;

We -

Welcome the joint statement by the Secretary-General of CITES and the Executive Secretary of CMS concerning the complementary role of CITES and CMS in supporting the conservation and management of lions in Africa;

Acknowledge that the 2015 IUCN Red List Assessment concluded that the lion remains Vulnerable at the global level, but established a 60 per cent decline in lion populations in Western, Central and

¹ Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Eastern Africa over the past 21 years, while the populations of Southern Africa increased by 12 per cent;

Welcome the 'Review of Lion Conservation Strategies' and its findings (December 2015), prepared as a CMS working document in response to CMS Resolution 11.32;

Recognize that the main threats (listed in no particular order) for lions in Africa are: (1) Unfavourable policies, practices and political factors (in some countries); (2) Ineffective lion population management; (3) Habitat degradation and reduction of prey base; (4) Human-lion conflict, (5) Adverse socio-economic factors; (6) Institutional weakness; and (7) Increasing trade in lion bones;

Acknowledge that all the objectives of the Regional Lion Conservation Strategies for West Africa, Central Africa, and Eastern and Southern Africa, requested at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP13, 2004), and developed in 2006 with support from IUCN, remain valid;

Agree that there is a need to improve the collection of scientific information and data as a solid basis to ascertain population statuses as well as to monitor regularly changes in populations in order to allow effective conservation and management decisions to be made;

Call upon Range States to strengthen their legislation on lion conservation, as well as promote the standardization of land-use designations, such as the standards of protected areas, establish effective governance structures and to improve law enforcement measures vis-à-vis migrating cattle holders and poachers, through initiatives such as the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operation directed at Illegal Trade in Flora and Fauna and the Horn of Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network (HAWEN);

Emphasize the need for the development of national action plans and adaptive management practices to conserve lions at the national level;

Agree that community-based natural resource management, the creation of incentives for local communities to engage in lion conservation, the sharing of conservation benefits and the establishment of mitigation measures can increase the lion range and are essential to the conservation success of lions.

Call for the establishment of viable ecosystem and wildlife-based land-use practices, ensuring that agricultural activities and mining operations do not impede lion conservation, including restoration programmes;

Highlight the benefits that trophy hunting, where it is based on scientifically established quotas, taking into account the social position, age and sex of an animal, have, in some countries, contributed to the conservation of lion populations and highlight the potentially hampering effects that import bans on trophies could have for currently stable lion populations;

Agree that partnerships between park management authorities, scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations, local communities and the private sector are vital to pooling scientific, technical and financial resources, informing conservation management as well as establishing acceptance of lion conservation in designated areas;

Recognize the need for transboundary cooperation and management systems in light of the high number of transboundary lion populations;

Emphasize that the lack of security and political instability have highly detrimental effects on lion conservation;

Acknowledge that the Regional Lion Conservation Strategies prepared in 2006 provided an important basis for the formulation of national strategies and action plans. However, in light of limited technical and financial resources, many Range States struggled to implement and institutionalize the Strategies at the national level;

Emphasize that the lack of resources and capacity has impeded the implementation of lion conservation activities on the ground;

Caution that the effects of climate change on ecosystems as well as the spread of diseases can have increasingly negative effects on lion populations;

Call upon CITES, CMS and IUCN to actively support conservation activities through the provision of scientific information to support resolutions and the appropriate listing of species, the establishment of a mechanism to develop and implement joint lion conservation plans and strategies, capacity-building in lion conservation and management, public awareness raising and education programmes and the establishment of a fund for specific emergency projects for lion conservation

Call upon CITES to support Range States with the setting up of databases, drafting comparative analyses of countries that allow or do not allow hunting, assistance in finding funds to establish a CITES task force on lions composed of countries most affected by poaching and illegal trade, the development of strategies to re-inforce international cooperation on trade in and management of lions, the assistance with undertaking a study on legal and illegal trade in wild lions, including lion bones, to ascertain the origin and smuggling routes in cooperation with TRAFFIC, and to provide support with enforcement.

Consider, with regard to the possible listing of *Panthera leo* in CMS Appendix II, that:

- (i) The listing concerns species with an unfavourable conservation status which require international agreements for their conservation and management, or species whose conservation would significantly benefit from international cooperation;
- (ii) CMS can provide a platform to exchange best conservation and management practices; support the development, implementation and monitoring of action plans; promote the standardization of data collection and assessments; facilitate transboundary cooperation; and assist in the mobilization of resources; and
- (iii) Many lion Range States would be in favour of such listing, but that Southern African Range States where lion populations are increasing question the inclusion of their population;

Welcome the draft report on *Panthera leo*, prepared by Kenya and Namibia in the context of the Periodic Review of the CITES Appendices, conducted by the Animals Committee (document AC27 Doc. 24.3.3), and acknowledge that this Periodic Review Process would end in case proposal CoP17 Prop. 4 goes forward at COP17;

Recognize, in relation to proposal COP17 Prop. 4 to transfer *Panthera leo* from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I, that:

- (i) It would be important to consider the relevant listing criteria in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16); and
- (ii) Lion Range States have different views on the inclusion of all African populations of *Panthera leo* in Appendix I, with some arguing that the populations in West and Central Africa are fragmented and highly threatened; and others arguing that the species does not meet the listing criteria and is threatened by factors other than those CITES can address;

Call upon CITES and CMS Parties, international and national, governmental and non-governmental organizations and research institutions to support the African lion Range States in their efforts to conserve and restore this iconic species across the continent, taking into consideration existing land-use practices;

Extend our sincere thanks to the Government of Uganda for hosting this meeting and to the Governments of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for their generous financial support that has enabled this meeting to take place.