

SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILDLIFE

1. The over-exploitation of wildlife is a result of many factors, such as population increases, poverty, unsustainable consumption and use and development. At the crossroads of these factors lies the question of sustainable use and specifically, how these multiple factors can be balanced so that the protection, conservation and sustainable use of wildlife are assured.
2. Sustainable use of wildlife assumes that there is a threshold limit which over-exploitation of wildlife, such as hunting, illegal trade of wild animal trophies, hides and skins, would be unsustainable. This threshold limit is at an equilibrium point. Certainly, this limit is highly theoretical concept, even though such point exists, it is difficult to identify precisely. Sustainability would be attained if the exploitation of wildlife for economic, health, social and cultural purposes does not significantly affect the animal population, their habitat and the ecological function they perform. There are, however, conditions under which wildlife hunting for both subsistence and commercial use could have little impact on the population of affected species. But these conditions are what are difficult to ascertain; and even when ascertained, are difficult to implement.
3. The challenges of sustainable use of wildlife are compounded further by lack of effective legislations, ineffective implementation of available legal regimes, and lack of capacity to understand and deal with sustainable use of wildlife. A final challenge is the lack of research and educational institutions that train wildlife specialists who operate as frontline workers in these areas.¹
4. Sustainable use is addressed under multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Convention on Migratory Species



(CMS) addresses both the conservation and management of migratory species and implicitly tackles the issue of sustainable use by reducing pressure on migratory populations while having regard for the livelihood needs of local communities.

5. CMS Resolution 8.1 on *Sustainable Use* confirms the “interests of CMS to develop strong collaborative arrangements with other biodiversity-related instruments and international organizations”.² In this respect, CMS continues to collaborate biodiversity related MEAs, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES has effective in ensuring that human needs remain compatible with wildlife conservation. The Convention has enabled local communities to benefit from the sustainable use of wildlife, and has protected migratory species that are threatened or endangered by international trade. Today, CITES accords varying degrees of protection to more than 30,000 species of

¹ Bennett, B.C. 2002. Forest Products and Traditional People: Economic, Biological and Cultural Considerations. *Natural Resources Forum* 26 (4): 293-301.

² Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. Cooperation with Other Bodies CBD/CMS Joint Work Programme (2002-2005), Document Inf.7.13. www.cms.int

animals and plants, whether they are traded as live specimens, fur coats or dried herbs. The relationship of such trade and protection measures to that of the conservation of migratory species is implicit. CBD has also come together with CMS to develop joint work programmes that reflect this policy direction of collaboration among MEAs.

6. In addition, CMS Resolution 8.1 acknowledges “that sustainable use (both consumptive and non-consumptive) may provide incentives for conservation and restoration because of the social, cultural and economic benefits that people could derive from that use and that, in turn, sustainable use cannot be achieved without effective conservation measures”. Thus, CMS also addresses the issue of reducing pressure on migratory animal populations, at the same time having regard for the livelihood needs of local communities including, where applicable, the conservation status of species.
7. A more detailed policy response is found in the *Sustainable Use of Biodiversity: Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines (AAPG)* which was developed and adopted under the scope of the CBD. The AAPG consist of fourteen interdependent practical principles, operational guidelines and a few instruments for their implementation that govern the uses of components of biodiversity to ensure the sustainability of such uses. It is recognized that the *AAPG* are relevant to the work of CMS, as they provide a framework to assist Governments, resource managers, indigenous and local communities, the private sector and other stakeholders to ensure that the use of wildlife will not lead to the long-term decline of these species.
8. When effectively implemented by the Parties to the CBD, the *AAPG* could contribute to reducing many of the causes of loss of

migratory species (e.g., by-catch, unsustainable harvesting, overexploitation, unsustainable hunting and other negative impacts) and lead to improved conservation of habitats for migratory species. Donors have a role to play in the improved implementation of AAPG to ensure sustainability of wildlife use.

9. In order to tackle challenges of sustainable use, it is important to consider land conservation, and enforceable land tenure regimes. There is also a need to involve civil society and community-based organizations in conservation and sustainable use of wildlife in order to build up to guarantee local communities the benefits of these activities.
10. Proper wildlife management techniques, including developing databases of existing information, Indicators for a wildlife population, monitoring of wildlife census results and modelling of populations, in the context of forest management may provide assistance in instances where donor funds are available to help manage key wildlife populations. Wildlife enforcement and monitoring systems that are in use can be modified and linked to dealing with implementation of un-sustainable harvesting and use of wildlife.
12. It is crucial to include and consider these issues using national policy processes, such as poverty reduction strategies (PRS), the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and to make a link to broader efforts to mainstream environmental considerations in PRS, as wildlife is one component that should be addressed when mainstreaming environmental concerns. It is equally important to mitigate against the potential for tension between the livelihood and conservation objectives by analyzing the livelihood implications of a given policy recommendation on all stakeholders.

