

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
CONCERNING
CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE
SAIGA ANTELOPE (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF
THE SAIGA ANTELOPE (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)**

between

The Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture 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 any 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 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 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 2nd Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 1988).
8. This Memorandum of Understanding shall take effect immediately after at least 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

(Signature)

(name in block letters)

(Date)

(function)

Representative of the
Russian Federation

(Signature)

(name in block letters)

(Date)

(function)

Representative of
Turkmenistan

(Signature)

(name in block letters)

(Date)

(function)

Representative of the
Republic of Uzbekistan

(Signature)

(name in block letters)

(Date)

(function)

Signatures of representatives of the Co-operating Organisations:

Representative of the
UNEP/CMS Secretariat

(Signature)

(name in block letters)

(Date)

(function)

