

10th Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) Executive Committee Meeting

22-23 September 2015

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) headquarters, Bonn, Germany

Attendance: Dieudonné Ankara (Central Africa – Congo), Badiah Said (Southeast Asia – Indonesia), Ousmane Kane (West Africa - Senegal), Aggrey Rwetsiba (East Africa – Uganda), Neville Ash (UNEP), Bradnee Chambers (CMS Secretariat), Doug Cress (GRASP Secretariat), Pia Jonsson (CITES Secretariat), Aline Kühl-Stenzel (CMS Secretariat), Ashley Leiman (Orangutan Foundation), Bert Lenten (CMS Secretariat), Emma Stokes (Wildlife Conservation Society), Melanie Virtue (CMS Secretariat), Serge Wich (GRASP Scientific Commission).

Absence: Francois LaMarque (France), Joakim Ladeborn (Sweden), Noéline Raondry-Rakotoarisoa (UNESCO)

Chair

The 10th GRASP Executive Committee meeting was chaired by Aggrey Rwetsiba (Uganda).

Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair asked for comments on the agenda and for additional items to be considered under “Any Other Business”. The Chair proposed to move the CMS Gorilla Agreement (3a) discussion to the afternoon when all required CMS staff would be available. The draft agenda was adopted as amended.

Opening Remarks

Bradnee Chambers, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), gave an opening speech. He congratulated GRASP on the continued strength of the partnership and noted opportunities for synergy between the work of GRASP and CMS, in particular of the Gorilla Agreement.

GRASP Technical Reports

GRASP Secretariat Report (2a)

1. GRASP Secretariat introduced the GRASP Secretariat Report.

2. The report emphasised the myriad projects and initiatives undertaken by GRASP and its partners in 2014-15, including palm oil analyses in Southeast Asia, transboundary collaboration projects in West Africa, important publications on Ebola in Africa and land-use planning in Borneo, high-profile events involving GRASP Ambassadors, presidential support in East and Central Africa for the World Great Apes Day petition, a regional workshop in Borneo, impactful social media and web campaigns, and the significant increase in the number of partners joining GRASP since 2013. GRASP now comprises 100 partners, and over half were engaged in GRASP projects in 2014-15.
3. The Chair congratulated the GRASP Secretariat on a successful year and noted that the Secretariat's report at the Council Meeting should also acknowledge the efforts of Range States for great ape conservation.
4. Congo, CITES, Orangutan Foundation and WCS requested information on GRASP activities be disseminated by the GRASP Secretariat more regularly and that GRASP Executive Committee documents be made available to members earlier prior to Executive Committee meetings. The Executive Committee encouraged the GRASP Secretariat to strengthen communication with the Executive Committee. The Chair agreed that this would be discussed under A.O.B.
5. GRASP Secretariat acknowledged that further engagement is necessary to advise range State and non-range State Focal Points of their responsibilities under GRASP, and noted that a Focal Point handbook was currently under development.

GRASP Scientific Commission Report (2b)

6. The Chair of the GRASP Scientific Commission introduced the GRASP Scientific Commission Report.
7. GRASP Executive Committee welcomed the Scientific Commission's workplan. UNEP asked the Scientific Commission to indicate priority actions within the workplan, given funding considerations and limitations. It was agreed that the Scientific Commission would meet to determine priority activities.
8. Congo noted a gap in the current literature regarding disease monitoring and suggested that the GRASP Scientific Commission produce a set of guidelines which range States could use to address this issue. The Chair of the GRASP Scientific Commission agreed to consult with zoonotic experts to determine any oversights in the available guidelines.

GRASP Project Reports

CMS Gorilla Agreement (3a)

9. CMS introduced the document on synergies between GRASP and the CMS Gorilla Agreement.
10. GRASP Secretariat welcomed the proposal for closer collaboration, but noted that any formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) would have to be signed by UNEP as GRASP is not a legal entity. Any agreement would call for GRASP to formally contribute towards the Gorilla Agreement implementation and for the CMS Secretariat to provide secretariat services as appropriate.
11. Congo commented that closer collaboration between GRASP and the Gorilla Agreement would give added value to GRASP through the legal framework that the Gorilla Agreement provides and could facilitate additional financial resources for GRASP projects.

12. GRASP Executive Committee agreed to the proposals made in document 3a and asked the CMS and GRASP Secretariats to continue to work together to explore opportunities for collaboration, including the possibility of a joint 3rd GRASP Council Meeting and Gorilla Agreement Meeting of Parties (MOP) in 2016.

Palm Oil Strategy/Programme (3b)

13. GRASP Secretariat highlighted the Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), signed in November 2014, and the implementation of a one-year South-South cooperation pilot project to support the expansion of sustainable palm oil in Africa, funded by UNEP.
14. UNEP emphasised the need for GRASP to develop a programme of work to support sustainable palm oil development, and Orangutan Foundation suggested that the GRASP Secretariat engage directly with leading companies such as Cargill and Wilmar International to promote sustainable management practices.
15. GRASP Secretariat highlighted its engagement in Cameroon in partnership with WWF to support preparation of a national High Conservation Value (HCV) assessment which will feed into the country's biodiversity action plan, and potentially serve as a template for other range States.
16. GRASP Executive Committee agreed that the GRASP Secretariat would produce a palm oil strategy document for comment and noted that the 3rd GRASP Council Meeting would be a suitable platform to launch the strategy.

Apes Seizure Database (3c)

17. GRASP Secretariat introduced the Apes Seizure Database and noted that GRASP intended to subcontract the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) for USD 85,000 with funding from Norway to build the database. Due to a change in administrative software at UNEP (to UMOJA, an SAS-based system) the project had been delayed. GRASP Secretariat confirmed that the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for the database had not been formed and Terms of Reference (ToR) for UNEP-WCMC had not been signed.
18. GRASP circulated the ToR for the TAG and the draft contract with UNEP-WCMC, which allowed GRASP Executive Committee members to comment.
19. UNEP, WCS and the Chair of the GRASP Scientific Commission suggested clearer definition of terms used in the documents. WCS noted that it would be helpful if a statistician was invited to sit on the TAG.
20. CITES noted that overlap between the CITES Trade Database and the Apes Seizure Database should be avoided and provided an update on the reporting process by CITES Parties.
21. WCS noted that the term "seizure" was not representative of the databases core data point and suggested that "illegal killing and illegal capture of apes" would be a more suitable focus and name for the database, since this reflected a gap in analysis which was not captured by CITES reporting.
22. Orangutan Foundation noted that the current composition of the TAG did not include an organisation working on seizures data from Asia and suggested Forum Orangutan Indonesia (FORINA) as the most suitable organisation. The GRASP Executive Committee agreed that the GRASP Secretariat would invite a representative of FORINA to sit on the TAG.

23. GRASP Executive Committee agreed that the GRASP Secretariat would redraft the ToR accordingly and circulate to the GRASP Executive Committee for review.
24. UNEP nominated WCS as the representative of the GRASP Executive Committee on the TAG, which was seconded.
25. GRASP Executive Committee suggested that the GRASP Scientific Commission representative would be the first choice for Chair of the TAG, but agreed that the TAG should select its own chair. The Chair of the GRASP Scientific Commission agreed to consult with the GRASP Scientific Commission members regarding its representation on the TAG.

Assessment: Gibbons in GRASP (3d)

26. GRASP Secretariat introduced the draft analysis, "Strategic Assessment for the Possible Inclusion of Gibbons into GRASP," and requested the Executive Committee to decide whether to approve the document to be put to a vote at the 3rd GRASP Council Meeting in 2016. He noted considerations regarding the resources and capacity available to GRASP, emphasising that there were currently no GRASP staff based in Asia.
27. Written comment submitted by UNESCO noted that UNESCO's Regional office for Science and Technology in Asia was based in Jakarta and could host a GRASP staff member.
28. UNEP, Orangutan Foundation, WCS, and the Scientific Commission expressed concern regarding bias in the assessment towards the inclusion of gibbons in GRASP, particularly as the consultant hired to prepare the document was a gibbon researcher supportive of inclusion. The above members additionally raised concern regarding the low number of interviewees included in the assessment and in particular, the lack of both African and Asian range State representatives in the interviews.
29. GRASP Executive Committee agreed that GRASP Secretariat would employ a further consultant to extend and improve the current assessment, including undertaking further interviews with range States, and would present this document on completion at one of the next GRASP Executive Committee meetings.

GRASP Report: Ebola and Emerging Infectious Diseases (3e)

30. GRASP Executive Committee endorsed the GRASP report on Ebola and Emerging Infectious Diseases.
31. The Chair of the GRASP Scientific Commission confirmed that the manuscript had been finalised and submitted to *Science Advances* for publication. He reminded GRASP that the release of the associated GRASP brochure must follow any acceptance of the paper by *Science Advances*.
32. UNEP noted that the release of the report was timely and commented that the nexus between great ape and human health was not strongly conveyed in the GRASP brochure, as it had been in the report.
33. The Chair of the GRASP Scientific Commission confirmed that GRASP would receive comments the following week regarding the GRASP brochure related to the publication. The Chair added that he was happy to send future publications to the GRASP Executive Committee for review.
34. GRASP Secretariat raised concerns over the submission of the report for publication, as that was not in the original Terms of Reference or the contract for the consultancy and the submission was done independently of GRASP. Given that GRASP partners called for the report – yet were now unable to view it until publication – GRASP Secretariat highlighted the

need for ownership of the output of consultancies to be clearly defined and suggested that this should be included in future Terms of Reference.

GRASP Regional Meeting – Southeast Asia (3f)

35. GRASP Secretariat reviewed results of the first GRASP Regional Meeting – Southeast Asia, which was held 27-28 in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. Highlights included a decision to increase orang-utan protection in Sarawak, the launch of the GRASP report, *The Future of the Bornean Orangutan: Impacts of Change in Land Use and Climate*, the announcement of the 2nd GRASP - Ian Redmond Conservation Awards, and a commitment by Sabah to sign the Kinshasa Declaration.
36. GRASP Secretariat confirmed the GRASP Regional Meeting - West Africa would take place in early 2016, at a venue to be confirmed.

World Great Apes Day (3g)

37. GRASP provided an update on the World Great Apes Day petition, which was drafted by the Government of Sierra Leone, and subsequently endorsed by Rwanda and the Republic of Congo. An event had been held at the African Union on 18 September and earned further support for the petition.
38. Indonesia expressed support for World Great Apes Day and advocated this as a good opportunity to increase the level of support received from private companies for great ape conservation.
39. GRASP Executive Committee endorsed the World Great Apes Day petition and encouraged the GRASP Secretariat to continue their support of this initiative, noting that fruitful high-level contacts had been established through the process which were beneficial to general GRASP implementation.

Senegal stakeholder process (3h)

40. GRASP Secretariat introduced the request by Senegal to the GRASP Secretariat to assist in the development of a platform for multi-stakeholder engagement in order to increase collaboration and communication between organizations working to conserve chimpanzees in that country.
41. Senegal noted the importance of the stakeholder process in engaging all partners in the protection of the transboundary chimpanzee population and expressed hope for a regional meeting between Liberia, Equatorial Guinea and Senegal to continue this good work.
42. UNEP congratulated GRASP on its response to Senegal's request and encouraged the GRASP Secretariat to share the outputs of the stakeholder process with the Executive Committee and other relevant bodies/organisations.

GRASP Focal Point handbook (3i)

43. GRASP Executive Committee agreed that consultation with GRASP Focal Points regarding the content of the Focal Point handbook was necessary and that the GRASP Secretariat, upon

finalisation of the draft handbook, would circulate the document to Focal Points, and following this, to the GRASP Executive Committee for review and finalisation.

44. Copies of the *Manual for the National Focal Points for CMS and its Instruments* were distributed, since this document is providing a useful template to develop the GRASP Focal Point handbook.

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3rd GRASP Council 2016 (3j)

45. GRASP Secretariat reported that the partnership expressed a strong desire to hold the 3rd GRASP Council in Asia, given that past council meetings had taken place in Africa and Europe, and GRASP had already commenced informal discussions with Indonesia as a possible host.
46. GRASP estimated the cost to the programme of holding the meeting in Indonesia to be \$160,000 USD. The meeting took note that given successful negotiation of a host government agreement, these costs could decrease.
47. Indonesia suggested that if Indonesia agreed to host the meeting, Bali, Bogor and Jakarta were all suitable locations, noting that Bali and Jakarta were most likely to have the capacity and the ability to attract high-level delegates.
48. CMS noted that Indonesia may want to receive further details of the agenda and potential outcomes of the meeting to assist with decision-making and budgeting. Indonesia emphasised the need to send an official letter and draft agenda with urgency as the Indonesian financial year ends in December.
49. GRASP Executive Committee agreed that host government negotiations with Indonesia were a priority and, following formal agreement by Indonesia, asked CMS and GRASP to jointly negotiate a host agreement. The GRASP Executive Committee suggested that an alternative location be decided upon should a host government agreement with Indonesia not be achieved, and Malaysia (Kota Kinabalu / Kuala Lumpur) and Kenya (Nairobi) were identified as alternatives.
50. GRASP Secretariat noted a number of themes suggested by partners as priorities going forward, and presented an informal list of these to the GRASP Executive Committee. Three main themes for the 3rd GRASP Council were chosen the GRASP Executive Committee: climate change, sustainable palm oil, and illegal trade.
51. CMS provided an overview of the online national reporting process for the Gorilla Agreement and the online reporting platform for CMS, and noted that GRASP would be welcome to apply this tool for reporting leading up the 3rd GRASP Council Meeting. The GRASP Executive Committee encouraged the GRASP Scientific Commission to access the current reporting process and explore options for expanding reporting on gorillas under the Gorilla Agreement to the other great apes under GRASP.

GRASP Partner Applications

52. GRASP Secretariat explained that neither of the two partner applications received by GRASP (Orangutan Appeal UK and EAGLE Network), were complete and therefore, neither were eligible for a vote by the GRASP Executive Committee at this time.
53. GRASP Secretariat emphasized the fact that many organisations were partners to GRASP multiple times under different umbrella networks. WCS raised concern that multiple

representation of GRASP partners under different umbrella groups would potentially not result in a democratic vote.

54. Orangutan Foundation expressed further concern that umbrella groups which were a partner to GRASP did not sufficiently represent their members, and therefore could not vote on behalf of all of the organisations within their network.
55. GRASP Secretariat recalled that GRASP partner categories were amended at the 2nd GRASP Council in 2012 and suggested a possible need to revisit the guidelines for GRASP partners to include guidance on the admittance of networks. The GRASP Executive Committee requested the GRASP Secretariat to prepare a document on the matter to form an agenda item at the next GRASP Executive Committee meeting, including an updated list of partner duplications.
56. GRASP emphasised that this issue required conclusion prior to the 3rd GRASP Council.

Next meeting of GRASP Executive Committee

57. GRASP Secretariat proposed Wednesday 25 November 2015 as a provisional date for the next Executive Committee meeting via teleconference and confirmed that the GRASP Secretariat would send an invitation to GRASP Executive Committee members closer to the time.

A.O.B

Apes Seizures Database: UNEP-WCMC Contract

58. WCS suggested that the proposed contract with UNEP-WCMC should include the requirement to consult with the Technical Advisory Group throughout the creation of the database, and noted that database management and data entry as described in the scoping document needed more attention, and that UNEP-WCMC would no doubt be suitable to take care of maintenance.
59. UNEP suggested that the Technical Advisory Group should review the Technical Specification (Annex 3) prior to the contract being signed.
60. GRASP Executive Committee agreed that GRASP Secretariat would circulate the current contract for comment to the Executive Committee and, following appointment, to the Technical Advisory Group for further review.

CMS Letter to Nigeria

61. CMS highlighted the issue of infrastructure encroachment in Cross River gorilla habitat in Nigeria and circulated a letter from CMS to the Nigerian Ambassador to Germany regarding this matter. Executive Committee members were invited to discuss the possibility of sending a joint letter from CMS and GRASP.
62. GRASP Secretariat noted that the GRASP Executive Committee had previously decided that the GRASP Secretariat was not empowered to send letters of protest or concern, but that was instead an option open to the Chair of the Executive Committee. But the Chair of the GRASP Executive Committee said he would not be able to personally or professionally issue a letter on behalf of GRASP criticizing another government. GRASP Secretariat suggested

that a letter already prepared by the GRASP Ambassadors could be released instead, and the GRASP Executive Committee agreed.

63. CMS confirmed would continue to pursue this matter of non-compliance under the Gorilla Agreement and would inform the Executive Committee of any progress.

GRASP and GRASP Executive Committee Communication

64. It was agreed that the GRASP Secretariat would establish an online shared drive for GRASP Executive Committee members to easily access relevant documents. In the past, email attachments had often been too large or for other reasons had not reached members, making effective communication challenging.
65. The GRASP Secretariat apologized for the lateness of preparatory documents for the GRASP Executive Committee and promised to circulate future documents well in advance of meetings.
66. It was noted with regret that the delegate from Congo did not participate in Day 2 of the GRASP Executive Committee meeting.