

Conclusions on the development of an action plan for the implementation of the Shark and Ray Listings under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by member range states in the African Region

WE THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SHARKS AND RAYS RANGE STATES OF BENIN, CABO VERDE, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, THE GAMBIA, GHANA, GUINEA, GUINEA BISSAU, LIBERIA, MAURITANIA, NIGERIA, SENEGAL, SIERRA LEONE, TOGO:

RECOGNIZING the critical role that migratory sharks, as one of the top predators of the oceans, play in marine ecosystems and conscious of their cultural and economic importance in many countries,

CONCERNED about the ongoing decline and significant mortality of sharks due to the cumulative and synergistic impacts of habitat loss and degradation, climate change, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, unsustainable target fisheries and fisheries by-catch, and unregulated or illegal international trade in parts and products including fins;

SUPPORTIVE of existing international shark conservation and management initiatives, including the Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO) voluntary International Plan of Action (IPOA) for sharks, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks signed under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), measures adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the 2007 and 2012 United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on Sustainable Fisheries;

SUPPORTIVE of the 2014 Casablanca Declaration adopted as a roadmap for the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) requirements in relation to sharks and manta rays and **MINDFUL** of the need to facilitate its implementation through stronger regional collaboration and the definition of complementary measures to undertake jointly;

CONSCIOUS of Goal 3 of the CITES Strategic Vision for 2008-2020 which provides that CITES shall endeavour to *“Contribute to significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss and to achieving relevant globally-agreed goals and targets by ensuring that CITES and other multilateral instruments and processes are coherent and mutually supportive.”*

RECOGNIZING the importance of the role of CITES for the conservation of listed shark and ray species and committed to the full implementation of this Convention, a global instrument for regulating international trade in listed wild species that are or may be affected by such trade.

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DECLARE the following to be priority short and mid – term objectives to ensure and strengthen the implementation of the CITES shark and ray listings in the countries listed above;

UNDERTAKE to implement the actions listed in collaboration with international partners and interested stakeholders as soon as possible and considering the CITES listing comes into effect in September 2014;

SEEK financial, scientific, and other support from the international community and interested stakeholders for the implementation of the priority actions.

URGE donor agencies to pledge to provide assistance for the implementation of these actions

Objective 1. Ensure that relevant national authorities in the region have a good understanding of CITES requirements and their implementation

- 1.1. Provide information about CITES Appendix II requirements for marine species and Introduction from the Sea requirements to all relevant national authorities, as appropriate (e.g. CITES, fisheries, ports, customs, maritime enforcement, Interpol and judicial authorities).
- 1.2. Develop procedures and training on how to make non-detriment findings for CITES-listed shark and ray species.
- 1.3. Develop a tool kit and resource guide for training new staff on CITES requirements.
- 1.4. Develop policies and procedures to ensure collaboration between all relevant government authorities, including CITES, fisheries, ports, customs, and maritime enforcement authorities, on CITES implementation and enforcement with special emphasis on landing sites, borders, and markets where shark and ray products are landed and traded.
- 1.5. Train all personnel in authorities involved in implementation and enforcement, including CITES, fisheries, ports, customs, maritime enforcement, and judicial authorities.

Objective 2. Obtain proper identification of CITES-listed shark and ray species and identification tools for sharks and ray species when caught and landed, and when in trade.

- 2.1. Create/distribute shark and ray identification guides and work towards the standardized reporting of shark and ray species landed in log books and other records.

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2.2. Develop methods to identify CITES-listed shark species parts and products that will be exported or imported (fin identification guides, other necessary identification guides, genetic identification techniques)

2.3. Provide training for relevant personnel on the use of identification guides and techniques.

Objective 3. Review and update domestic legislation and regulations relevant to the implementation of CITES.

3.1. Review domestic legislation and regulations to assess whether :

- CITES-listed shark and ray species where fished are caught in sustainable numbers or protected if necessary
- these provisions comply with RFMO and other regional or international fisheries bodies measures
- sanctions and penalties provided under these provisions are sufficiently deterrent and harmonized regionally as relevant.

3.2. Identify where domestic legislation and regulations should be updated based upon review and update where necessary.

Objective 4. Enhance the implementation of the requirements of CITES through tracking procedures, data-collection, data reporting and scientific research

4.1. Improve the collection and reporting of standardized data on CITES-listed and other shark and ray species that are caught and landed to assist CITES Parties in making the findings needed for export of CITES-listed shark species.

4.2. Develop a chain of custody or traceability system to track CITES-listed shark and ray species products from catches to export.

4.3. Develop regional harmonized species-specific customs/tariff codes for CITES-listed shark and ray species and improve the collection of trade data on CITES-listed and other shark and ray species.

4.4. Develop a harmonized regional approach for making legal acquisition findings for CITES-listed shark and ray species (legal origin and sourcing) taking into account port state measures.

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- 4.5. Conduct stock or ecological risk assessments of CITES-listed shark and ray species.
- 4.6. Develop protocols when relevant to share data relative to shared stocks.
- 4.7. Set up a regional DNA research laboratory.

Objective 5. Strengthen enforcement, cooperation, and coordination relative to the implementation of the requirements of CITES shark listings on a regional basis

- 5.1. Strengthen and coordinate enforcement efforts related to sharks and rays through, *inter alia*, the conduct of joint enforcement operations, the creation of a regional enforcement network allowing strengthened regional collaboration between enforcement authorities and sharing of resources, etc.
- 5.2. Coordinate regional requests for capacity building funding from the CITES Secretariat and other sources.
- 5.3. Work within RFMOs to strengthen conservation and management measures for CITES-listed shark and ray species to complement CITES listings by helping to ensure that catches are legal and non-detrimental to the survival of the species.
- 5.4. Work towards the reduction of bycatch of CITES-listed shark and ray species in fisheries targeting other marine species.

Objective 6. Promote sustainability of protected shark and ray species through targeted communication, education and public outreach

- 6.1. Launch public information campaign about shark and ray species that are endangered or threatened (threats, protection status, measures to take to reduce threats)
- 6.2. Launch public information campaign about finning and the impact of international trade in fins of shark and ray species in the African region.

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- 6.3. Launch public information campaign about CITES listings, CITES requirements and updated legislative/regulatory requirements with special emphasis on fishermen, wholesalers and traders.

- 6.4. Develop curriculum and train the trainer trainings on CITES to make sure fisheries and wildlife conservation is covered for example under social studies or other related courses