

YOUR EXCELLENCIES
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
DEAR FRIENDS

It is a great pleasure and a privilege for me to attend this 54th meeting of the General Assembly of CIC. On behalf of Mr. Robert Hepworth, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species, I would like to convey his best regards to you. Unfortunately due to other commitments, he is not able to attend this meeting. However he promised to do his utmost to attend the next General Assembly. Furthermore he requested me to represent CMS during this meeting.

Since the 49th General Assembly I have attended all General Assemblies until today. This should be seen as a token that CIC is an important partner organisation for the Convention on Migratory Species as well as for the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, for which I am responsible as Executive Secretary. Over the years the working relationship between CIC and our organisations has evolved and been strengthened. CIC has taken a seat in the *Friends of CMS* which is a German-based Association with the goal to support the implementation of CMS and its Agreements. I hope that CIC also sees us as being their friends.

As I said, I participated in the last 5 General Assemblies and when preparing this speech I looked back to see what has been achieved over this period. In close cooperation with the Migratory Bird Commission a number of resolutions have been drafted and adopted by previous General Assemblies e.g. the Resolution on the Lesser White Fronted Goose, the one on Avian Influenza, on Lead shot for hunting in Wetlands, etc; so from that point of view, I am very pleased with the actions taken by CIC.

As a friend of CIC I hope you will also permit me to provide you with some slightly critical feedback with regard to actual achievements. Yes of course a number of Resolutions have been adopted but what has been done to implement these Resolutions? The Lesser White Fronted Goose is still a threatened species; one of the main threats is hunting in Greece and Kazakhstan. The use of lead shot is still not widely banned for hunting in wetlands. Some hunter's organisations are still questioning why AEWA gives such high priority to this issue. So it could be questioned what the impact of all these Resolutions has actually been?

As Head of AEWA I have to deal with nature conservationists on the one hand and with hunters on the other hand. I know most of you will say that hunters are conserving nature but that is not always the perception of the general public. To be honest with you hunters can be a threat for some endangered species. CMS has been confronted with hunting on gazelles in North and West Africa. For years they have been trying to re-introduce several gazelle species in the wild. You can imagine that it is not encouraging for us to continue our conservation work if a hunting party kills a high number of these gazelles in one of the West African countries, as happened recently. A few weeks ago I received the good news that a group of ornithologists discovered a flock of 1400 sociable Plovers in

Syria. At the same time a cry for help was sent out in the same area because preparations were underway to build a camp for tourist hunters. I personally interfered and called the Government of Syria to take action. The good news is that the Government of Syria took this very seriously, has taken action and that specific site will be protected in a certain way, in the nearby future.

The issue I would like to address is that we should all avoid the outside world thinking that hunters are speaking with two voices. Let's be clear about this - you can't promote sustainable hunting as an organisation if you don't do your utmost to avoid unsustainable practices. Millions of waterbirds are dying due to lead poisoning; this is clearly not a wise use of nature resources. Endangered species are still threatened by hunting and this also can't be seen as sustainable use. So my message is yes - CIC has achieved a lot regarding adopting Resolutions - but now real attention should be given to the implementation of these decisions.

I hear you thinking... yes nice plans Mr. Lenten but we are lacking resources. It is evident that to implement the above mentioned resolutions funds are needed. It is also clear that CIC as an Association does not have sufficient funds available in their current budget to do this and it is unlikely that you will decide to increase the budget substantially. However we know if there is a will you will find the necessary resources. A reference could be made to the Elephant Diner that takes place annually in Paris and, if I am not wrong, it generates on average 100-150,000 euro. I am sure that if you are convinced more must be done to protect wildlife you could probably raise at least €1 million annually. If I just look at FACE; they represent 7 million hunters in Europe. So if each of them contributed €1 EURO, you could receive 7 million in one go. Needless to say if you look at the private and corporate sectors you could raise even more. So there is a lot of potential among hunters to really do some conservation work. The ball is in your court now.

Finally hunters are under pressure. There are a lot of people out there that don't see a justification for what you are doing. By being more pro-active you can really show that hunters could have an added value. I would say it's now up to you; show the outside world that CIC also stands for wildlife conservation in the broadest sense of the word!

Please be aware you are not alone in this. As a friend of CIC, the Convention on Migratory Species as well as the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement are ready to work with you to achieve our common goal, namely to conserve wildlife for future generations.

Thank you for your attention.