



**Statement on behalf of**

**Robert Hepworth  
Executive Secretary**

**of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild  
Animals (CMS)  
to the**

**13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the  
Agreement on the Conservation on Populations of  
European Bats (EUROBATS)**

**Cluj, Romania; 23-24 August 2008**

Dear Participants,

I send my very best personal wishes to you for another successful Advisory Committee, on behalf of your Parent convention, and the Executive Director of UNEP. We pass on our thanks to the Government of Romania for hosting the meeting.

Once again you have a full and demanding agenda before you, as part of the continuous process of conserving bats right up to the edge of Europe's boundaries, and indeed beyond, as they are migratory species. This remains the only Agreement within CMS covering bats, and you continue to have the opportunity to show the world what can be achieved after more than 17 years of co-operation and expansion.

Later this year, the full Conference of CMS Parties takes place in Rome, hosted by the Government of Italy. I would like to invite EUROBATs to take this opportunity to show Parties from other continents what you are achieving, by holding a side-event, and to help us set up an intersessional working group to draft a bat agreement for Africa. The threats faced by bats mean it is time to make our efforts global, and to prepare for the CMS Year of the Bat in 2011.

Everything we do, or seek to achieve, for conservation is now overshadowed by the gathering clouds of climate change. Migratory species, including bats, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of human-induced climate change at various stages of their life cycles. Following a Resolution on climate change passed at the last CMS conference in 2005, the UK has funded pioneering research to identify a set of indicator species, to provide early warning and information on the impacts of climate change on migratory wildlife. The results will be published in time for the COP later this year. Amongst the indicators identified as important conceptually, but in need of further data and development, are three concerning bats:

1. The abundance of bats at underground hibernation sites in Europe;
2. Populations of Straw-coloured Fruit Bats in Africa; and
3. Populations of Mexican Free-tailed bats.

The first of these is of particular interest to EUROBATS. There is likely to be a recommendation that EUROBATS and Batlife Europe should co-operate to develop this indicator, generally using existing data. Resources will be needed and we hope that the EUROBATS Advisory Committee will be able to take the lead in commissioning this work, perhaps for announcement during the next CMS Conference of Parties.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chair and several members of the EUROBATS Standing Committee for their positive and constructive input earlier this year to consultations on the organizational proposals for the “Future Shape” of CMS. It is likely that these proposals will progress through an intersessional process for final decision at the 10<sup>th</sup> CMS COP in 2011. However as an interim measure, the CMS Secretariat will propose to COP9 that their existing Information and Media Unit in Bonn begin to provide a comprehensive service on media, information, fundraising, capacity building and new accessions to those agreements which seek it. The initial customers are likely to include EUROBATS, ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS. This is a practical way to respond to the need for synergies and greater efficiency, without compromising the legal integrity or independence of CMS Agreements. In the case of smaller Agreements like EUROBATS, it is expected that there would be an agreed financial input towards the costs of the service and joint projects. This remains to be negotiated.

Once again, I wish you all a most successful and fruitful meeting in Romania!