

5th MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO ASCOBANS
The Netherlands, 18-20 September and 12 December 2006

Resolution No. 2d

**Joining the forces of ASCOBANS and CMS for improved management and
operation of the ASCOBANS Secretariat**

Conscious of the need to guarantee the maintenance of the conservation efforts of ASCOBANS;

Recognizing the need to maintain a strong focus on the conservation of the most threatened populations of small cetaceans, in particular the harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea;

Acknowledging the need to make optimal use of the resources at the disposal of the Agreement;

Recalling Resolution 1 of the Third Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS (MOP3, Bristol, 26-28 July 2000) *Integration of the ASCOBANS Secretariat into the Agreements Unit of UNEP/CMS*;

Aware of the necessity to reach an increase of efficiency and output of the limited financial means and in awareness of the need to strengthen the power of the Agreement;

Underlining the political will to reach a stronger, stable and more cost efficient agreement prepared for forthcoming challenges and for a better and closer interrelation with the mother convention CMS on small cetaceans issues;

Mindful of the report from the United Nations' Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Internal Audit Division, dated 24 August 2006 which found a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibility for the administration of budgetary preparations and management contributed to a sizeable overspend against provision in the triennium 2004-2006;

Welcoming the recommendations in the OIOS report that budget guidelines should be prepared by UNEP covering roles and responsibilities for budget preparation;

Recognizing that in the wider context of improving international environmental governance, there is a need to be open to synergistic arrangements which can help secure economies of scale and more effective delivery of environmental goals;

The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS

Agrees to maintain the ASCOBANS Agreement as an autonomous agreement of CMS under the immediate auspices of UNEP/CMS;

Decides that from 1 January 2007 the UNEP/CMS Secretariat shall serve as the secretariat pursuant to provision No. 4 of the ASCOBANS Agreement, and the Executive Secretary of UNEP/CMS shall be the acting Executive Secretary for ASCOBANS;

Agrees that the Executive Secretary of CMS, in his capacity of the acting Executive Secretary of ASCOBANS, should adopt for a provisional three year period the responsibility for managing the ASCOBANS Secretariat, acting as the Executive Secretary; requests the Executive Director of UNEP to undertake an independent evaluation of the new Secretariat arrangements in mid 2008; and further requests the results of this evaluation to be considered by the Conference of the Parties (COP) of CMS in 2008, followed in due time by the MOP of ASCOBANS in 2009, with the aim of identifying the best organizational solutions for ASCOBANS;

Instructs the Executive Secretary of CMS, in his capacity as the acting Executive Secretary of ASCOBANS, to ensure that:

- the current cycle of ASCOBANS meetings is maintained with papers circulated a month in advance of each meeting (in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure);
- tasks, programmes and strategies agreed by the MOP pursuant to Annex I of the Agreement will be implemented, including the Jastarnia Plan (for the protection of the harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea), the future development of a Conservation Plan for harbour porpoises in the North Sea, and the geographic extension of the Agreement expected to enter into force in 2007;
- an adequate focal point and website for the ASCOBANS Agreement area will be available for the Parties;
- reports are provided to future Meetings of Parties and Advisory Committee Meetings, including their subgroups on scientific or technical issues and including 6 monthly overviews of the state of affairs on administrative and budgetary issues and the delivery of these tasks;
- they continue and improve effective communication with Parties, Range States, non governmental organisations and international organisations, such as the European Commission, OSPAR, HELCOM, ICES, ACCOBAMS, CBD and IWC;
- awareness-raising and public information activities, including through the 2007 Year of the Dolphin, are maintained and enhanced for species under the Agreement;
- there is an increased profile and a proper representation at an adequate level at meetings of other relevant agreements and conventions;
- there is no loss of continuity in the administration and functioning of ASCOBANS during the transition period;
- the budget for the next triennium is provided for consideration by the Advisory Committee at least six months prior to the next Meeting of the Parties;

Agrees to fund through an independent budget the operational costs of the Secretariat, including provisions for the CMS Executive Secretary, in his capacity as the acting

Executive Secretary of ASCOBANS, and any other staff resources which are allocated to the running of the Secretariat, as set out in Resolution 2c on Financial, Budgetary and Administrative issues of ASCOBANS MOP5;

Encourages close co-operation, exchange of information as well as expertise between the Advisory Committee of ASCOBANS and the Standing Committee and Scientific Council of CMS;

Reaffirms the autonomy of the Meeting of the Parties as the decision making body of the Agreement;

Agrees that, for the administration of the ASCOBANS Secretariat within the UNEP/CMS Agreements Unit, the Terms of Reference annexed to Resolution 3.1 (ASCOBANS MOP3) shall continue to apply.