

WORK PLAN FOR THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SECRETARIAT 2021-2024

Reaffirming the importance of cooperating with and complementing the work of other international bodies and the desirability of drawing upon their expertise,

Recognizing that much progress is achieved by the commissioning of work by specialists, whether members of the Advisory Committee or otherwise,

Recalling CMS Resolution 10.15 (Rev.COP12) *Global Programme of Work for Cetaceans*, Resolution 11.2 (Rev.COP12) *Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023*, Resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP13) *Synergies and Partnerships*, Resolution 11.22 (Rev.COP12) *Live Captures of Cetaceans from the Wild for Commercial Purposes*, Resolution 11.23 (Rev.COP12) *Conservation Implications of Animal Culture and Social Complexity*, Resolution 11.27 (Rev.COP13) *Renewable Energy and Migratory Species*, Resolution 11.29 (Rev.COP12) *Sustainable Boat-Based Marine Wildlife Watching*, Resolution 12.14 *Adverse Impacts of Anthropogenic Noise on Cetaceans and Other Migratory Species*, Resolution 12.20 *Management of Marine Debris*, Resolution 12.21 *Climate Change and Migratory Species*, and Resolution 12.22 *Bycatch*,

Further recalling that 8th Meeting of the Parties adopted the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023, appended in CMS Resolution 11.2 (Rev.COP12),

Also recalling United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1 (2015) adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and welcoming the inclusion therein of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its commitment on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, while recognizing also the connections between healthy and productive oceans and other Sustainable Development Goals,

Reaffirming that the Advisory Committee, as a body with the task of providing advice on scientific, policy-related and administrative matters, needs a balance of scientists, policy-makers and administrators to cover its role adequately,

Stressing that the successful work of the Advisory Committee depends on the ability of its members to allocate sufficient time to the work of the Committee and its working groups,

Grateful to the chairs and members of the working groups supporting the Advisory Committee in its functions,

Acknowledging the important role that non-governmental organizations play in the work of the Advisory Committee and its working groups,

Noting also the other resolutions adopted at this meeting and having a bearing on this Work Plan, in particular Resolution 8.1 (Rev.MOP9) *National Reporting*.

The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS

1. *Decides* that, subject to sufficient resources being provided, the Advisory Committee and Secretariat should carry out the Work Plan attached as Annex 1;
2. *Instructs* the Secretariat to provide reports on its progress with the implementation of relevant parts of the Work Plan to each meeting of the Advisory Committee;

3. *Decides* that the Advisory Committee, its working groups and the Secretariat, with respect to the implementation of the activities requested of the Parties, should:
 - (a) focus each year's agenda for the Advisory Committee meeting on the issues covered in the Annual National Reports on the previous year, according to the schedule outlined in Resolution 8.1 (Rev.MOP9) *National Reporting*;
 - (b) monitor general developments with respect to other issues at stake, and report if new urgencies arise, including from topic areas considered by the working groups;
 - (c) identify for each relevant activity in the Work Plan related work streams of other fora, and strengthen the cooperation and interaction in particular with the European Commission (DG Mare and DG Environment), other international organizations (e.g. ACCOBAMS, CBD, CMS, HELCOM, ICES, IWC, NAMMCO and OSPAR), fishery and other economic sectors and non-governmental organizations;
 - (d) encourage co-operation and interaction with non-Party Range States;
4. *Calls upon* Parties to submit meaningful National Reports as outlined in Resolution 8.1 (Rev.MOP9) in order to enable the Advisory Committee to assess progress with the implementation of the Agreement and make recommendations accordingly;
5. *Reiterates* its request that Parties:
 - (a) ensure that all Advisory Committee members and their advisors can allocate time to attend Advisory Committee meetings, to intersessional work, and to participate in intersessional Advisory Committee working groups;
 - (b) continue to ensure where possible suitable expertise within delegations to the Advisory Committee;
6. *Encourages* Parties and relevant non-governmental organizations to support the activities outlined in Annex 1 by means of financial and in-kind contributions;
7. *Urges* Parties and *invites* other States, relevant multilateral bodies, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations working towards the conservation of migratory species to integrate the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan within relevant policy and planning instruments, and also to take action to raise awareness of the Plan; and
8. *Urges* Parties to implement the relevant actions agreed in other extant Resolutions adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS as well as the Conference of the Parties to CMS.

Annex 1: ASCOBANS Work Plan 2021-2024

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
Habitat Conservation and Management			
Fisheries-related Threats			
1. Review new information on bycatch and associated strandings, bycatch mitigation and monitoring measures, including remote electronic monitoring and any further new techniques as well as local initiatives, and fisheries effort. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	9.2 Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoise 8.3 Jastarnia Plan 8.4 (Rev.MOP9) Common Dolphins 8.5 (Rev.MOP9) Bycatch 8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
2. Identify future pilot studies for bycatch mitigation, taking into account the outputs of the review of mitigation measures in fisheries with high bycatch within the ASCOBANS Agreement Area, and in close liaison with other initiatives (e.g. IWC Bycatch Mitigation Initiative).	8.5 (Rev.MOP9) Bycatch	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	As soon as possible
3. First meeting of the Joint Bycatch Working Group to be organized as soon as possible and in partnership with ACCOBAMS and the agreed host country, addressing issues in line with its Terms of Reference.		Secretariat and the Joint Bycatch Working Group	2021
4. Review whether the following remain appropriate, bearing in mind the overall objective of the Agreement to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for small cetaceans, as well as relevant regulations and work carried out under those, and to make recommendations to Parties as appropriate: (a) the current maximum annual anthropogenic removal rate of 1.7 per cent of the best available estimate of abundance for harbour porpoise; (b) the current intermediate precautionary aim of reducing bycatch to less than 1 per cent of the best available estimate of abundance;	8.5 Bycatch (Rev.MOP9) 5.7 Research 5.5 Incidental Take 3.3 Incidental Take	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022

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(c) the objective of restoring and/or maintaining management units or populations to 80 per cent or more of their carrying capacity; (d) the assessment/management units that have been proposed for regularly occurring species.			
5. Make recommendations on appropriate triggers indicating when an environmental limit (the sum of all interactions within the environment that impact animals) is at risk of being reached or exceeded.	8.5 Bycatch (Rev.MOP9)	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
6. Review new information on resource depletion and its impacts on small cetacean populations. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	9.4 Food Availability and Resource Depletion 8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)			
7. Review new information on underwater noise , its impacts on small cetaceans and their prey species, mitigation measures, technological developments, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.6 Ocean Energy 8.8 Munitions 8.9 Cumulative Impacts 8.11 (Rev.MOP9) Noise EIA Guidelines 6.2 Offshore Construction 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2021
8. Assess whether national navies' mitigation protocols for use of military sonar are effective. This requires Parties to request the mitigation protocols from the navies.	8.8 Munitions 8.9 Cumulative Impacts 8.11 (Rev.MOP9) Noise EIA Guidelines 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Group) / Parties	2021
9. Review new information on ocean energy , its impacts on small cetaceans, mitigation measures, technological developments, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.6 Ocean Energy 8.9 Cumulative Impacts 6.2 Offshore Construction 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2021

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
10. Review new information on the cetacean watching industry , impacts on small cetaceans, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023
11. Review new information on recreational sea use , impacts on small cetaceans, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023
12. Review new information on other sources of disturbance , impacts on small cetaceans, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023
Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)			
13. Review new information on underwater munitions and, their impacts on small cetaceans and cetacean habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.8 Munitions 8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2021
14. Review new information on marine debris (ingestion and entanglement), including microplastics, and its impacts on small cetaceans. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	9.3 Marine Debris 8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
15. Review new information on other forms of pollution and hazardous substances, and their impacts on small cetaceans and cetacean habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.7 PCBs 8.9 Cumulative Impacts 7.4 Chemical Pollution 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023
16. Review new information on ship strikes and their impacts on small cetaceans. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts 5.4 Adverse Effects	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023
17. Review new information on climate change and ocean acidification, and the impacts these have on small cetaceans, as for example distribution, habitat, and prey. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
18. Review new information on physical habitat change , e.g. from construction, and its impacts on small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023
19. Review new information on any other issues , including emerging issues posing a potential threat, and the impact they have on small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023
Management of Cumulative Impacts			
20. Review best practice approaches to management of cumulative impacts on small cetaceans and their habitats, such as marine spatial planning. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.9 Cumulative Impacts	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2021
21. Contribute to the development or updating of risk maps showing the spatial and temporal (by season) distribution of activities that have an impact on cetaceans, including information provided in National Reports (in the context of marine spatial planning), taking into account the work done by other organizations (funding may be required).	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting	AC	2024
Area-based Conservation / Marine Protected Areas			
22. Review best practice approaches to management of marine protected areas for small cetaceans. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2023
23. Contribute to the development or updating of the map of MPAs where cetaceans form part of the selection criteria, for the entire ASCOBANS Area, including information provided in National Reports, taking into account the work done by other organizations (funding may be required).	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting	AC	2024

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
Species Action Plans and Regional Initiatives			
24. Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan), establish further implementation priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan and promote the implementation of the Plan.	8.3 Jastarnia Plan 7.1 Porpoise Conservation 6.1 Jastarnia and North Sea Plans	Jastarnia Group	At each annual meeting
25. Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea, establish further implementation priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan (following national consultations and any national conservation plans) and promote the implementation of the Plan.	7.1 Porpoise Conservation 6.1 Jastarnia and North Sea Plans	North Sea Group	At each annual meeting
26. Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Seas and the Kattegat, establish further implementation priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan and promote the implementation of the Plan.	7.1 Porpoise Conservation	Jastarnia Group	At each annual meeting
27. Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin, promote its ongoing implementation, establish further priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan.	8.4 (Rev.MOP9) Common Dolphins	Common Dolphin Group	At each meeting
28. Review progress and actions in the “Extension Area”, maintain or establish collaboration, as appropriate.	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting 7.3 Actions in Extension Area 5.3 Extension of Area	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	At each AC meeting
Surveys and Research			
Biological Information			
29. Review new information on population size, distribution, structure, life-history parameters and causes of any changes in the ASCOBANS Area of populations of small cetaceans. Make appropriate recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities.	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
Monitoring and Survey Schemes			
30. Review new information on monitoring programmes relevant for small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
31. Review new information on dedicated surveys and other research relevant for small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting 5.7 Research 4.7 Populations 3.5 Population Studies	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
32. Contribute to preparing for and supporting SAMBAH-II, scheduled to start in 2021, including securing funding accordingly.	5.7 Research 4.7 Populations 3.5 Population Studies	AC / Parties	Throughout the intersessional period
33. Contribute to preparing for a SCANS-IV (MMANA Project or equivalent) survey taking into account scientific and geographical coherence for the good assessment of small cetacean populations (in particular common dolphin and harbour porpoise) and securing funding accordingly. The actual boat and aerial survey should be no later than 2022, noting that the next MSFD assessment is due in 2024.	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting 5.7 Research 4.7 Populations 3.5 Population Studies	AC / Parties	2021
34. Contribute to the development or updating of maps of survey effort, including information provided in National Reports, taking into account the work done by other organizations where appropriate (funding may be required).	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting	AC	2024
Project Funding			
35. Issue call for project proposals when instructed to do so by the Advisory Committee, and conduct consultation on prioritization to the next meeting.		Secretariat	When instructed
36. Prepare for each meeting of the Advisory Committee an overview of approved activities requiring funding.		Secretariat	At each AC Meeting

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
Use of Bycatches and Strandings			
Stranding Networks and Strandings			
37. Review new information on the establishment and functionality of stranding networks, especially with a view to facilitating liaison and skill-sharing. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
38. Engage actively in the ongoing work on best practice guidelines for stranding events in the frameworks of the International Whaling Commission and ACCOBAMS.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups) / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
39. Facilitate development of guidelines for responses to individuals or groups of live small cetaceans at risk in dangerous circumstances.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	Throughout the intersessional period
40. Review new information provided through the national reports. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting 8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
41. Promote the use of joint ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS best practice on cetacean post-mortem investigation and tissue sampling, and standardize reporting procedures of Post-Mortem Examinations statistics.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response	AC / Secretariat / Parties	Throughout the intersessional period
42. Continue monitoring new information on the causes of strandings and mortality of cetaceans, as well as best practice guidance on stranding responses and necropsies, and to make recommendations to Parties as appropriate.	8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response 5.7 Research	AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	2022
43. Contribute to the development or updating of a map showing location and numbers of strandings (both dead and alive), including information provided in National Reports, taking into account the work done by other organizations where appropriate.	8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting	AC	2024

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
Information and Education			
Information, Outreach and Education			
44. Develop the ASCOBANS website and other information material as needed, aiming to meet the needs of a wide range of target audiences in the languages of the Agreement Area.	5.8 Education and Promotion	Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
45. Support annual celebration of the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise on the 3 rd Sunday in May.	8.3 Jastarnia Plan	Parties / Partners / Secretariat	Every year
46. Facilitate presentation of the ASCOBANS Outreach and Education Award at MOP10.		Secretariat / AC	2023
47. Take advantage of attendance at other fora to give presentations or make information available on topics related to ASCOBANS.		Secretariat / Parties / Partners	Throughout the intersessional period
48. Report on communication and outreach matters to the Advisory Committee.		Secretariat	At each AC Meeting
Stakeholder Involvement			
49. Work towards strengthening or establishing positive relationships with stakeholders, especially the fishing industry and European Fisheries Advisory Councils.		AC / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
Institutional Issues			
Meetings, Working Groups and Workshops			
50. Undertake a work prioritization exercise, involving ranking the different activities of the Work Plan how the Advisory Committee sees fit.		AC	2021
51. Establish an intersessional working group to identify the barriers to understanding and improving conservation status of data deficient taxa. This will		AC	2021

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
include identifying which species and populations are of particular concern and how their status might be best remedied.			
52. Ensure Advisory Committee Meetings are organized as scheduled, with papers circulated one month in advance of the meetings.		Secretariat	For each AC Meeting
53. Arrange for a special session dealing with a species selected by the previous meeting at each meeting of the Advisory Committee, covering issues such as population status and structure, distribution, abundance, life history, threats and pressures, the conservation status and recommendations for research and conservation actions.		AC / Secretariat	For each AC Meeting
54. Organize meetings of regional working groups (Jastarnia Group, North Sea Group, Common Dolphin Group) at intervals defined in each group's TOR.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
55. Organize workshops including at the annual conferences of the ECS on topics of priority interest to ASCOBANS, funding permitting.		Secretariat	As instructed
56. Support intersessional correspondence working groups as needed.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
57. Seek to secure a host for MOP10 at least a year in advance of the meeting; otherwise arrange for it to be held in Bonn.		Secretariat	2023
Budgetary and Administrative Matters			
58. Report on budgetary and administrative issues to the Advisory Committee.		Secretariat	At each AC Meeting
59. Prepare draft budget options and resolutions on budgetary and administrative issues for consideration at the last meeting of the Advisory Committee prior to MOP10.		Secretariat / AC	2023

WORK PLAN ACTIVITY	LINK TO EXTANT RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY	TIMING
60. Encourage Parties and partner organizations to provide voluntary contributions for projects prioritized by the AC or outreach initiatives.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
61. Develop funding arrangements for projects prioritized by the Advisory Committee and Meeting of Parties.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
Cooperation with Other Organizations			
62. Identify priorities and complementarity and improve cooperation between ASCOBANS and institutions of the European Union.		AC / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
63. Ensure close collaboration with the Secretariats and scientific advisory bodies of the CMS Family on all issues of mutual interest.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
64. Seek to cooperate closely with ECS, HELCOM, ICES, IWC, NAMMCO, OSPAR, UNCLOS, UNEP and other relevant organizations by determining possible win-wins, including those activities that require mapping (21, 23, 34, 43).	9.3 Marine Debris 8.6 Ocean Energy 8.7 PCBs 8.8 Munitions 8.10 (Rev.MOP9) Stranding Response 5.8 Education and Promotion	AC / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
65. Seek to collaborate with the ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC), the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) established by the European Union, the Regional Coordination Groups, the IWC Bycatch Mitigation Initiative, and other relevant organizations addressing bycatch.	8.5 (Rev.MOP9) Bycatch	AC	Throughout the intersessional period

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66. Convey information on the effects of PCBs on small cetaceans to UNEP, the Stockholm Convention, the CLRTAP Protocol on POPs, HELCOM and OSPAR for further consideration and possible action, and seek to engage with these processes as far as feasible.	8.7 PCBs	Secretariat / AC	Throughout the intersessional period
67. Seek to strengthen collaboration with civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations.		AC / Partners / Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
68. Consider the relationship of ASCOBANS to other organizations (e.g. OSPAR, HELCOM, IWC, EU Commission, European Topic Centre for Nature Conservation), in order to identify potential duplication or gaps in efforts. Any observations to be communicated to MOP10 in the form of a draft resolution.		AC	Throughout the intersessional period
69. Compile a list of Dates of Interest and report back on issues relevant to ASCOBANS to each meeting of the Advisory Committee. This requires participants at meetings identified in the list to confirm their attendance by email to the Secretariat after the meeting.		Secretariat / Parties / Partners	At each AC Meeting
70. Insofar as budgetary provisions and guidance by the Advisory Committee allow for it, ensure proper representation at meetings of other relevant organizations.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
National Reports			
71. Identify and, where possible, address any issues that Parties might encounter regarding the compilation of the National Report.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
72. Make full use of the information submitted in order to assess progress in the implementation of the Agreement and make recommendations to Parties.		AC	Annually

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73. Tailor the agenda for each of the meetings of the Advisory Committee to reflect the topics selected for the previous year's national reports.		AC	Annually
Other Matters			
74. Consider output of the informal working group on large cetaceans in the Agreement Area, which summarizes information on the species and addresses aspects of their conservation.		AC (incl. relevant Working Groups)	As appropriate during the intersessional period
75. Promote accession of non-Party Range States and the European Commission to the Agreement.		Secretariat / Parties	Throughout the intersessional period
76. Present to the Meeting of Parties a summary of, <i>inter alia</i> , progress made and difficulties encountered since the last Meeting of Parties.		Secretariat	At MOP10
77. Support Parties, Range States and Agreement bodies in implementing this Work Plan, in so far as primary responsibility does not lie with the Secretariat.		Secretariat	Throughout the intersessional period
78. Present to Parties, each year no later than 30 June, provided all reports have been received sufficiently in advance of that date, a compilation of Annual National Reports.		Secretariat	At each AC Meeting