



SUMMARY OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON NATURE CONSERVATION IN TRANSBOUNDARY AREAS IN NORTH EAST ASIA

2-4 NOVEMBER, 2010, HUNCHUN, CHINA

1. There are over one hundred protected areas along international borders among North-East Asian countries, of which one-tenth are categorized as strictly protected areas or national nature reserves. In particular, about two dozen protected areas adjoin neighboring protected areas across international borders. This situation requires transboundary cooperation, ranging from simple communication to full coordination of action among governments, authorities of protected areas, local communities, and conservation groups.

2. Since the mid 1990s, North-East Asian countries have gradually strengthened bi-/multilateral cooperation on nature conservation in transboundary areas and established, for example, an intergovernmental cooperation mechanism for the Dauria Protected Area (DPA) between China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation as well as an intergovernmental cooperation mechanism for the Khanka-Xingkai Lake Nature Reserve (KLNR) between China and the Russian Federation. Furthermore, local governments and authorities of protected areas in the Amur-Heilong River Basin have increased the level of formal and informal cooperation among neighboring partners. However, problems of nature conservation in transboundary areas are yet to be effectively addressed in North-East Asia.

3. Concerning the significance of transboundary cooperation on nature conservation, the member countries of North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) have decided to undertake a joint project on the *“Development of Cooperation Mechanisms for Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas”*. The

geographical scope of the project includes three major transboundary areas, i.e., the Lower Tumen River basin, Dauria region and the Khanka-Xingkai Lake region. In particular, the project aims to develop a framework for transboundary cooperation mechanisms in the Lower Tumen River basin encompassing parts of China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Russian Federation in order to protect flagship species in North-East Asia, with particular focus on the Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard.

4. The **Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas in North-East Asia** was jointly organized by NEASPEC and the Department of Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve Management, State Forestry Administration of China, as the inception meeting of the project on the Development of Cooperation Mechanisms for Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas in North-East Asia. The EGM was held on 2-4 November 2010 in Hunchun, China. The meeting was attended by over 60 experts and officials including 38 participants nominated by governments of China, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation and over 20 participants from local institutions, NGOs and international organizations. The list of nominated participants is attached herewith.

5. The meeting focused on:

- reviewing approaches and practices in existing transboundary protected areas in North-East Asia, highlighting the establishment of transboundary protected areas and the creation of ecological corridors
- reviewing existing bi/multilateral cooperation in transboundary areas in North-East Asia, highlighting intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms on the Dauria Protected Area and Khanka-Xingkai Lake Nature Reserve
- reviewing national and international plans and activities for the conservation of flagship species in the Lower Tumen River Area
- discussing achievements and challenges of transboundary cooperation in North-East Asia
- discussing potential mechanisms for transboundary cooperation in the Lower Tumen River Area
- organizing internal country consultation meetings and discussing the country

proposals

6. **Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas: approaches and practices:** The meeting reviewed approaches and practices of nature conservation within transboundary areas in China, Mongolia, Russian Federation and the Korean Peninsula. *The establishment of transboundary protected areas* has been recognized as a critical step of nature conservation. Protected areas in Mongolia are categorized into: Strict Nature Reserves (48%), National Parks/Managed Reserve (43%), and Natural Monuments (9%) while in the Russian Federation they are categorized as National Parks (1%), State Wildlife Preserves (17%), Natural Monuments (65%), and Therapeutic Areas (9%). Since the 1990s, *the creation of an ecological network* has been recognized as another important approach of preservation and management of an ecosystem in transboundary areas. The study of ecological networks in North-East Asia showed the important role of the ecological network in the protection flagship species and habitats. The study suggested the adoption of appropriate measures and operations to promote sustainable development in the potential ecological networks of North-East Asia.

7. **Bi/multilateral Cooperation in Transboundary Areas in North-East Asia:** Representatives from China and the Russia Federation reviewed their protection work and the intergovernmental cooperation in the *Dauria region*. They emphasized that the establishment of a joint commission played a key role in implementing conservation programs in the Dauria region. From 1994 to 2010, the Joint Commission held five meetings, organized more than 15 working group meetings, and launched more than 90 joint research investigation, monitoring and education programs. From 2000 to 2007, the range of joint monitoring has already been expanded to the eastern part of the Daurian Steppe and the total protected area increased up to 300,000 square meters. In 2007, the Russian management body of the Dauria Protected Area started to conduct conservation studies on the Amur Watershed and the Chinese management body joined this protection activity later in the same year. In 2010, the Russians decided to establish a transboundary ecosystem monitoring network. In particular, more than 100 monitoring sites in the Russian Federation, China and Mongolia will be included in the network over the next few years. Up to now, 60 monitoring sites have already been developed on the Russian side.

The network will also include the International Ecological-Ornithological Station - three or more national ecological-ornithological stations for joint study, monitoring and conservation of ecosystems and birds in Dauria. The national stations will operate in accordance with joint international plan and methods.

The protection work in the *Khanka-Xingkai Lake region* was also discussed as a good example of transboundary cooperation of nature conservation in North-East Asia. Since the Governments of China and the Russian Federation signed an agreement on strengthening intergovernmental cooperation between the Xingkai Lake Nature Reserve of China and the Khanka Lake Nature Reserve of the Russian Federation in 1996, more than 15 meetings have been organized among government agencies, law enforcement agencies, scientific institutions and non-governmental organizations. In 2003, the Chinese and Russian local governments, the World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF) and nature reserve administrations discussed the creation of a Chinese-Russian co-commission for KLNR. In the same year, a working group meeting for promoting activities of KLNR was held in Mishan, China. In 2005, a Chinese-Russian Workshop on Joint Scientific Research of migratory birds was launched in China, with the aim to promote wetland protection in the reserve. In spite of all this rapid progress, the first co-commission meeting of KLNR was not held until 2009. According to the 2009-2010 cooperation plan made in the first co-commission meeting, the workshop for ornithologists of KLNR was held in the Russian Federation in 2010. Representatives argued that the lack of a Chinese-Russian long-term mechanism is a significant barrier to conservation cooperation in the reserve. They also advocated strengthening the transboundary cooperation mechanism to effectively develop joint protection activities and improve the management capacity for international cooperation.

8. **National and International Plans and Activities for the Conservation of Flagship Species in the Lower Tumen River Area:** This session focused on the protection of three flagship species: the Amur Tiger, Amur Leopard, and crane species in the Lower Tumen River Basin. *Amur Tiger* inhabits the eastern parts of Northeast China, the Russian Far East and the northern part of DPR Korea. Historically most Amur Tigers lived in northeast China while the population in the Russian Far Eastern faced extinction between 1940 -1960.

Currently, the Russian Far East area contains 430-500 tigers while an optimistic estimation of the tiger population in China is only around 20, which means that migration of tigers from the Russian Federation will be essential for the recovery of the Amur Tiger in China. In order to facilitate tiger migration, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) identified the eastern Wandashan Mountain range as a key Amur Tiger protected area and suggested creating an ecological corridor between the eastern Wandashan Mountains and tiger habitats in the Russian Federation via the Strelnikov Range. WCS also proposed *seven transboundary steps* to facilitate the recovery of the Amur Tiger in protected areas, including developing land use plans and increasing prey density as the *first two steps*. The former aims to ban transportation infrastructure in tiger habitats and the later focuses on strengthening law enforcement and improving anti-poaching activities. The *third and fourth steps* are the removal of border fencing between China and the Russia Federation and monitoring of prey and tiger numbers. *The fifth step* focuses on illegal trading of tiger products and *the sixth step* asks for a mechanism for exchange of information at the regional level. Based on these sixth steps above, *the seventh step* of establishing a transboundary cooperation mechanism on nature conservation could be achieved. Since three separated protected areas, *i.e.*, Borisovskoye Plato refuge, Barsovy refuge and Kedrovay Pad reserve started to merge as one entity last year, it has become easier to develop a transboundary protected area along the Chinese and Russian border.

Chinese Amur Tiger experts estimated that there are 10-14 tigers remaining in Heilongjiang Province and 8-10 tigers remaining in Jilin Province. So far sixteen nature reserves for the Amur Tiger, at state or provincial levels, have been established in China. Examples are the Hunchun Tiger Nature Reserve, Changbai Mountain Natural Reserve in Jilin Province; the Niaoqingshan Natural Reserve and Phoenix Mountain Natural Reserve in Heilongjiang Province. The total protected area for the Amur Tiger is 9886.84 km². In particular, the State Forestry Administration of China (SFA) identified three priority protection areas for the Amur Tiger: the Changbaishan Mountain region, Hunchun-Waingqing-Donging-Suiyang Region, and Wandashan Mountain region. Within these priority protected areas, habitat conservation, capacity building for habitat preservation and monitoring, community development, and international cooperation are the four cores of Amur Tiger protection work proposed by the SFA.

Since *Amur leopard* protection work requires very similar methods to the conservation of the Amur Tiger, experts indicated that activities discussed above are applicable for Amur Leopard protection. The meeting also discussed the protection of the Javan Leopard and Snow Leopard. The presentation introduced the methodology of population monitoring and international cooperation for leopard conservation, highlighting camera trap surveys and radio-tracking surveys. This presentation also showed how to apply the nature conservation strategy of NEASPEC into the conservation work of the Snow leopard. These discussions on the Javan Leopard and Snow Leopard provided valuable information for Amur Leopard protection.

The conservation status of the *White-naped Crane and Hooded Crane* in China was reviewed in this session as well. Due to the migration and wintering nature of cranes, experts emphasized the necessity to develop a crane protection network. The downstream region of the Tumen River is an important habitat of the White-naped Crane and Hooded Crane in China. This area encompasses dispersed wetlands, such as the Sonbong Wetland Reserve, Sonbong Al Land Reserve, Uam Reserve, Khasan Wetland Reserve and Far East Marine Reserve. Thus experts proposed the establishment of transboundary wetland protected areas to improve protection work on cranes in the Lower Tumen River basin.

9. **Transboundary Cooperation in North-East Asia - Achievements and Challenges:**

The meeting evaluated major *achievements* of Amur Tiger protection in the *Hunchun Nature Reserve*. Since the Hunchun Nature Reserve was upgraded from provincial level to state level, the SFA and the Jilin Province Forestry Administration have already allocated 12 million RMB (around 1.8 million USD) for infrastructure development in the Reserve. The Hunchun Forestry Bureau also contributed 10 million RMB (around 1.5 million USD) to carry out protection activities in the Hunchun Nature Reserve, focusing on developing a monitoring system with the application of Management Information System (MIST), strengthening law enforcement on anti-poaching, creating public education programs and enhancing international cooperation. The Hunchun Nature Bureau plans to develop an anti-poaching patrol team which is composed of local farmers in Hunchun areas. The Bureau is committed to creating connectivity between priority protected areas and

establishing ecological corridors connecting to the Russian Federation. It also intends to address conflicts between local citizens and tigers by developing alternative income sources and compensation programs for local communities. It is believed that these actions could secure the survival of up to 8-10 tigers over the next 10 years in the Hunchun area.

Amur Tiger conservation work in *Heilongjiang Province* has progressed over the past decade. Field surveys and monitoring data showed that the estimated number of the Amur Tiger in 2000 was 5.5, which increased to 12 in 2006. According to the 2006-2007 monitoring data, tiger activity information was gathered in the eastern Wandashan Mountain (15), Southern Laoyeling (13), and Northern Laoyeling (5). The activity information indicated the number of tigers stabilized around 10-14 tigers in Heilongjiang Province in 2007.

After reviewing the current national situation, the discussion moved on to the *challenges* of existing conservation work in protected areas. Participants identified the *inadequate level of financial support* as a major challenge. Each year, the Chinese Government and the Russian Government only provide funding for the basic operation of the nature reserves and there is no additional funding for project development in these reserves. The *communication barrier* between protected areas in China and the Russian Federation is identified as another challenge. Participants from the Dauria region and Khanka-Xingkai Lake region pointed out that the language barrier hampers exchange of information and effective communication between protected areas and their respective counter-agencies. In addition, organizing joint conferences and exchange programs between protected areas have been hindered by high visa fees and strict visa requirements. For example, the fee for applying for a Mongolia visa in China increased to 900 RMB (around 135 USD) recently. The application for a Chinese visa requires complicated paperwork and takes at least half a month to obtain. A *lack of personnel* directly dealing with international cooperation is the third significant challenge to existing mechanisms. Staffs in nature reserves are not able to divert their attention to international cooperation programmes since most of their time is occupied with routine domestic work in the reserves.

10. Potential Mechanisms for Transboundary Cooperation in the Lower Tumen

River Area: The session began with a discussion on *the geographic scope and what flagship species* should be targeted under the cooperation mechanism. Participants argued that if the Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard are only the targeted animals, rather than confining the protected region to the Lower Tumen River basin, the geographic scope should be expanded further northeastward toward tiger habitats in Heilongjiang Province. The Secretariat clarified that the potential mechanism will only focus on two flagship species---the Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard. The main reason is that there is greater urgency to ensure the survival of endangered terrestrial animals via transboundary cooperation. Regarding the geographic scope for the protected area, the potential mechanism could be flexible to involve other habitats of the Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard outside of the Lower Tumen River Basin. Also, the Secretariat pointed out that the aim of the joint project is to provide complementary support to existing mechanisms rather than duplicating conservation work that has already been implemented in the Lower Tumen River Basin.

Challenges discussed in session 7 are needed to be taken into account when the Secretariat is designing potential mechanisms for transboundary cooperation in the Lower Tumen River basin. The meeting provided specific suggestions on developing a *management mechanism* and a *financial mechanism* to address current challenges of protection work in the Lower Tumen River area. Chinese experts suggested that the essential component of a *management mechanism* is to organize a joint working group, comprising of three members from each country: China, the Russian Federation and DPRK. They also suggested that the three members have different roles; one member should act as the focal point of the state nature conservation administrations, another member should be an officer who has the authority to distribute financial and human resources from provincial administrations, and the final member should be local staff in protected areas, who are responsible to implementing specific projects in the areas. Participants proposed that NEASPEC should fill in the financial “gap” that governments cannot provide for developing conservation programmes and improving inter-government cooperation. However, rather than “filling in” the financial “gap”, the Secretariat would like to develop a *financial mechanism* to “bridge” the “gap”. The financial scope of NEASPEC cannot compete with other international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and Asia

Development Bank (ADB), not mention that of governmental agencies. The advantage of NEASPEC is to provide a political platform for international cooperation between member countries in North-East Asia. Nevertheless, one great potential funding opportunity that NEASPEC could bring is to link together transboundary mechanisms between the Lower Tumen River and the *Global Tiger Initiative (GTI)*. GTI aims to ally itself with thirteen tiger range countries, international organizations, private sectors and civil society to prevent the extinction of tigers. The International Forum on Tiger Conservation (also known as the “Tiger Summit”) which is hosted by the Russian Government with support of the World Bank and Global Environmental Facility will be held in St. Petersburg on November 23, 2010. Thirteen government leaders, including Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Chinese government officials, will attend this summit and sign the St. Petersburg Declaration affirming their commitment to save wild tigers from extinction. This is the first high-level meeting with an agenda focused on saving endangered tiger species. The meeting is expected to endorse a *Global Tiger Recovery Program* that includes urgent and comprehensive national and international actions to double the number of tigers across their respective country ranges by 2020. The Secretariat would like to explore a connection between transboundary conservation mechanisms in the Lower Tumen River and the Global Tiger Recovery Program. The connection could help financial support for transboundary protected areas.

The meeting also discussed *specific plans for developing concrete activities* for the next one to two years under proposed mechanisms. Experts suggested that the Secretariat should incorporate the agreement on joint protection of the Amur Tiger between Jilin Province in China and Primorski Krai in the Russian Federation when identifying priority actions in protected areas. In August 2010, the agreement was signed for improving the exchange of information on tigers in the two provinces, establishing a unified system for controlling and monitoring the animals, carrying out joint inspections in survey areas, and developing a campaign in the Russian-Chinese border against poaching. The agreement has already developed a framework for improving transboundary cooperation between Jilin Province and Primorski Krai, which could act as a platform for NEASPEC to identify urgent actions and launch priority activities for tiger and leopard protection in the greater Hunchun area.

The discussion particularly highlighted the following actions. The *first* action is to appoint focal points in Jilin Province and the Hunchun Nature Reserve Bureau to finalize Chinese members for the joint working group. At the same time, Russian and DPRK counterparties should also appoint their own members. The Secretariat should strive for involving DPRK in the working group. Also, the working group should set up a schedule for periodical meetings in which representatives are able to discuss their needs, share information, and propose joint work plans. *Second*, the Secretariat could create a trust fund for improving communication among China, the Russian Federation and DPRK. Communication programmes such as exchange visits, joint conferences and survey training programs would play key roles in attracting stakeholders' interests to improve international communication. Since communication programs require minimal funding, NEASPEC should be able to provide initial funding for the short term. Except financial support, the Secretariat will channel the technology transfer of webcams and telephone communications from Japan to protected areas in the Lower Tumen River Basin. *Third*, the establishment of ecological corridors along the Chinese-Russian border should also be a priority action. Removal of border fencing to create an ecological corridor is a complicated and politically sensitive issue that cannot be accomplished without unified administrative support from different sides. For example, in order to remove the border fence between China and the Russian Federation for tiger migration, approval is required from the SFA, Provincial governments, and border control administrations in China and the Russian Federation. It is extremely difficult for local protected area administrations to go through this bureaucratic process, but the Secretariat could coordinate the approval procedure domestically and internationally.

11. **National Consultations among Chinese and Russian Participants and Country**

Proposals: In order to better understand the needs of nature conservation in China and the Russian Federation, the Secretariat simultaneously facilitated internal consultation meetings among Chinese participants and Russian participants, respectively. By means of these meetings, each country will be able to provide its own proposal regarding nature conservation in the Lower Tumen River Area. According to country proposals, the Secretariat could identify the common interests among member countries and thus

develop joint actions and plans to further improve international cooperation based on these common interests.

The *Chinese participants* proposed a step-by-step method for acknowledging the geographic scope of tiger and leopard protected areas. The primary scope for Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard protection in the Chinese territory should focus on the Hunchun and Wangqing areas in Jilin Province. The scope could be expanded to the Dongning and Suiyang areas in Heilongjiang Province, if funding is available in the future. The Dongfanghong area in Heilongjiang Province could be the final targeted tiger habitat to be included under conservation mechanisms. In the proposal, the Chinese suggested seven fields for joint actions and plans:

- Coordination of anti-poaching activities
- Joint survey and monitoring
- Strengthening and enforcing conservation polices and measures
- Strengthening management and technical capacity of nature reserve authorities
- Raising public awareness and participation
- Development of ecological corridors between transboundary areas
- Improving protection work in the Jilin-Primorsky transboundary area

The *Russian* proposal identified the geographic scope of the protected area as covering the Tumen River Basin, the Khanka Lake (the lower Amur River basin), and Dauria (the upper Amur River basin). The proposal also suggested that priority species in the protected areas should be the White-napped Cranes, Hooded Cranes, and Black-faced Spoonbills. After clarifying the geographic scope and targeted species of protected areas, the proposal provided recommendations on potential cooperation mechanisms and potential pilot projects in the areas. Since officials from Amur Tiger protected areas in the Russian Federation were not able to attend the meeting, the proposal mainly focused on the Khanka Lake and Dauria areas. For the Khanka Lake, the proposal suggested conducting joint censuses of breeding cranes and other water birds on the Chinese and Russian sides. For the Dauria region, it suggested creating a transboundary Russian-Chinese-Mongolian Ecosystem Monitoring Network (EMN). The proposals also intended to develop joint studies of the population status of the White-naped Cranes and a joint census of migratory cranes and other water birds in both the Khanka Lake and Dauria region. These two

country proposals attached hereto as Annex I and II

12. **Conclusion and Recommendation:** This three day meeting provided a platform for deep communication among delegations from member countries of NEASPEC. After learning experience based on existing intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms for the Dauria Protected Area and Khanka-Xingkai Nature Reserve, the meeting concentrated on discussions of the protection of the Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard. Based on the discussion, participants provided suggestions for addressing difficulties and challenges in future work in the Lower Tumen River Basin. While the Chinese proposal focused on the protection of the Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard, the Russian proposal provided valuable recommendations on biodiversity conservation in the Khanka Lake and Dauria areas, participants from Japan and Republic of Korea suggested providing technical support for the protection work in the Lower Tumen River Basin, and Mongolian participants emphasized the biodiversity conservation in the Dauria area. All this information offered substantive ideas for the Secretariat to further strengthen existing mechanisms and facilitate creating new mechanisms for nature conservation in North-East Asia. The Secretariat made various suggestions in the conclusion session: (a) NEASPEC will act as a platform for intergovernmental cooperation, channeling financial resources and providing political support to protected areas and nature reserves in North-East Asia; (b) The Secretariat will adopt a step-by-step approach which leads to a short-term plan and medium-long term plan for follow-up activities. The short-term plan could concentrate on urgent concrete actions for the next year while the medium/long-term plan intends to create a more solid intergovernmental mechanism for nature conservation; (c) In the short term, the Secretariat will prepare a plan of priority actions to suit the needs for improving the Jilin-Primorsky agreement through establishing a joint expert working group, conducting joint monitoring programs, improving exchange of anti-poaching experience, strengthening multilateral communication and developing a plan for ecological corridors.

The following proposals are attached as submitted by each delegation from China and the Russian Federation.

Annex I: Proposal from Chinese Participants

跨境区域虎豹保护合作的潜在机制

Potential Mechanisms for Transboundary Cooperation in the Lower Tumen River Area

讨论主题 1：反偷猎行动的合作

Discussion topic 1: Coordination of anti-poaching activities

- 1、制定联合行动方案和计划
- 2、反盗猎信息交流
- 3、反盗猎经验和成效评估
- 4、反盗猎实施主体的交流合作
- 5、反盗猎技术培训及能力建设

- 1, the development of joint action programs and plans
- 2, anti-poaching information exchange
- 3, anti-poaching experiences and effectiveness evaluation
- 4, exchange and cooperation of anti-poaching between implementers
- 5, anti-poaching training and capacity building

讨论主题 2：合作调查及监测

Discussion topic 2: Joint survey and monitoring

- 1、统一调查、监测方法及标准
- 2、监测信息定期交流与共享，建立数据共享平台
- 3、人员定期培训
- 4、跨境联合调查检测行动
- 5、科研合作

- 1, the uniform methods and standards for survey and monitoring
- 2, monitoring information exchange and sharing on a regular basis, establish data sharing

platform

3, periodical staff trainings

4, cross-boarder joint survey and monitoring

5, research cooperation

讨论主题3：加强和落实保护政策及措施

Discussion topic 3: Strengthening and enforcement of conservation policies and measures

建立跨境保护合作协调机制及实施机构，建立跨境虎豹保护专家组

The establishment of cross-boarder cooperation and coordination mechanism and implementation of conservation organizations, as well as cross-border tiger leopard protection group

讨论主题4：加强自然保护区的管理及技术能力

Discussion topic 4: Strengthening management and technical capacity of nature reserve authorities

1、保护区定期互访和经验交流

2、制定共同的保护管理目标

1, periodical visits and experience exchange in protected areas

2, the development of a common goal of conservation management

讨论主题5：提高公共保护意识和参与度

Discussion topic 5: Raising public awareness and participation

1、相互参与保护宣教活动，如老虎文化节、豹节等

2、联合举办青少年夏令营

3、联合出版宣教刊物

1, mutual activities of conservation education and publicity works, such as the Tiger Festival and the Leopard Festival

2, jointly organized the Youth Summer Camp

3, the joint missionary publications

讨论主题 6: 跨境东北虎生态廊道建设

Discussion topic 6: development of ecological corridors in transboundary areas

- 1、联合调查研究
- 2、规划设计和建设
- 3、检测管理

- 1, the joint investigation
- 2, the planning and design and construction
- 3, monitoring and management

讨论主题 7: 推动吉林省和滨海边疆区域跨境保护工作深入开展

Discussion topic 7: improving further development of the protection work in Jilin-Primorye transboundary areas

Annex II: Proposal from the Russia Participants

Suggestions of Russian Delegation to the Framework or the Transboundary Cooperation in NE Asia

1. To mark three key sites for development of the Cooperation Mechanisms-Tumen River Basin and Khanka Lake (the Low Amur River basin), and Dauria (the Upper Amur River basin) – to help in realization existing cooperation there and to help in development of new ways and mechanisms of cooperation; to support pilot cooperation projects in all these three sites.

2. To mark White-napped Crane, Hooded Crane, and Black –faced Spoonbill as priority species. To support pilot projects for international cooperation for study, monitoring and conservation of these species.

3. Suggested pilot projects for development of the Cooperation Mechanisms:

3.1. Khanka Lake – Joint censuses of breeding cranes and other waterbirds on Russian and Chinese sites;

3.2. Dauria – Creation of the transboundary Russian-Chinese-Mongolian Ecosystem Monitoring Network (EMN). Main tasks of the EMN:

- To study of influence of the global climate change to biodiversity in Global Transboundary Dauria Ecoregion. Special attention – to White-naped Crane, Hooded Crane and other globally threatened species.

- Monitoring and study of populations of waterbirds preparation of recommendations for conservation of them. Special attention – to White-naped Crane, Hooded Crane and other globally threatened species.

- Adaptation of national and international politics of using of nature resources in Dauria to climate change: Development of sustainable using of nature resources, conservation of biodiversity.

The work for establishment of the EMN was begun by DIPA staff in 2010. In 2010 more 60 sites in Russia and Mongolia were described, monitored and analyzed. EMN included mainly key wetlands and grasslands. In 2011 this work will be continued in Russia and Mongolia and it will be started in China. Final and will include more 100 representative monitoring sites. In 2010 five kinds of monitoring were done on each site:

1) Ornithological monitoring;

- 2) Botanical monitoring;
- 3) Monitoring of anthropogenic pressure;
- 4) Ground photo monitoring;
- 5) Satellite images / GIS monitoring;

In 2011 other kinds of monitoring will be developed too (chemical monitoring of water and other)

EMN includes different sites with three levels of intensity of monitoring: primary sites (annually monitored), secondary ones (monitored ones during 2-3 years), third-rate sites (monitored ones during 4-6 years), and fourth-rate sites (observed more rare than 6 years and occasionally observed).

Background: There are 20 globally threatened species in Dauria. For some of them region has key importance. For example, about 23% of world population of White-naped Crane breeds there; about 10% of world population of Hooded Crane gathers there during migration. Dauria is key gathering site of migratory cranes in North-Eastern Asia. Mid-term climatic cycles about 20 years duration with alternation of period of about 15 dry years and 15 wet years have great influence to ecosystems of Dauria. During 2000-2009, about 98% of wetlands in Dauria were completely dry. It has great negative influence to populations of cranes and other waterbirds. Anthropogenic pressure grew much during 2000-2009.

The project is realized by staff of DIPA. Joint long term monitoring and study of biodiversity and ecosystem is very important and effective mechanism of cooperation

3.3 In Khanka and in Dauria – joint study of population status of White-naped Crane, study threats, preparation recommendations for conservation.

Background: Dauria has key importance for White-naped Crane – about 23% of world population of White – naped Crane inhabit there. Population Status now is critically bad because of climate change and because of very strong anthropogenic pressure. Khanka Lake also is important habitat of White-naped Crane. Population status there is stable.

3.4. In Khanka and in Dauria – joint censuses of migratory Cranes and other waterbirds.

Background: Dauria and Khanka – two most important stopover sites of White-naped Crane, Hooded Crane and millions of other species of waterbirds in north-eastern Asia

Annex III: Participant List

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