

AIDE MEMOIRE

MEETING ON THE WHALES EVENT in ANTISOHIHY – la LOZA BAY

Date: June 10 , 2008 – 6:00 p.m

Location: Conference room MINENVEFT Tsimbazaza

Attendees: Following entities are represented

- **MINENVEFT** Ministry of Environment, Water & Forest and Tourism :
 - Directeur de Cabinet
 - Responsable gestion des especes
- **MAEP:** Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries:
 - Directeur de Cabinet ;
 - Directeur des Peches et des Ressources Halieutiques
- **MEM** Ministry of Energy and Mines: Directeur des Hydrocarbures
- **ONE:** DG, USPP, UEIE, SF
- **ANGAP:** DG
- **NGO's:** WWF (2) , FANAMBY
- **ExxonMobil:** Environment Consultant & Logistics Supervisor
- **WCS**

Focus: Report of the situation by the ministerial delegation on trip in Antsohihy on Monday June 9

Situation

1. In total : 55 whales died, 44 alive
2. 7 Experts are on site through 2 flights arranged from Antananarivo (1 died floating , 27 died (minimum) and 39 (maximum), found in 2 or 3 groups of animals).
3. Official Delegation joined the local official team in Antsohihy on Monday June 9 . The objective of their mission is to get more official information and assist local communities and authorities in rescue operations.

Delegation is composed of

- **MAEP:** Directeur de Cabinet , CSP, Attache de Presse
- **MINENVEFT:** Responsable gestion des especes
- **ONE:** USPP,
- **NGO's:** WCS
- **CSP**
- **Three experts from Tana**

in Antsohihy, delegation had a courtesy visit to Sofia Region that reported what has been done so far in Antsohihy and Analalava. The Region main action is focused to get local communities aware of the situation and involved in the rescue operations. 4 boats are being used of which 2 from gendarmerie, 1 from Nosy Be and 1 from a private in Antsohihy. They attempted three times to bring whales back to ocean, no success. They just get some whales in the lake within the river (at 10 -15km from Antsohihy Harbor). Expenses are charged by WCS so far. There are logistics problem. The rescue work depends tremendously on the daily rescue progress. Anyway, all Experts will leave on Friday June 13. Work should continue if deemed necessary.

The Directeur of Cabinet MAEP, Chef de la Delegation, highlights that this is a quite abnormal event which never happened anywhere in the world. He stated: if this event is repeated again, it would be a high risk for marine biodiversity, thus we need to find out the main cause.

4. Question to the adhoc committee: in case of a whale is seen in bad shape , quite sick, what would the adhoc committtee authorize the Experts to proceed to euthanasia? The question is pertinent because these whales are protected species. Response of the Committee: we cannot authorize any euthanasia since international press and internet could have many comments accusing Madagascar to kill marine mammals.

5. SOS Whales bank Account is being created

Experts work

1:30 p.m: meeting with experts

- Experts have been split into 2 groups, one for rescue and one for necropsies to investigate the cause
- Procedures to rescue and to explore / inspect are well defined but the intervention strategy could be changed according to the results and progress of the rescue actions. Rescue team found 9 alive
- 1 died at Antsohihy port.
- There was local communities meeting in order to get well organized

Experts leave Antsohihy (Tuesday 7:30 a.m) to Analalava (overnight)

One group of 7 mammals moved to Analalava. Exhausted animals in a bigger group are quite far from the river mouth they go into the mangroves.

Aerial survey revealed they are moving in a counter current direction which get them more exhausted.

Scientific correction : those mammals are not dolphins they are small mammals.

These animals behave in a group, upon one is getting stressed it needs a particular care otherwise the other group members will be concerned.

The more rescue team pushes them to the ocean, the more all group members are stressed and they all are getting more and more tired.

CSP noticed also that Analalava district has no facilities to supply diesel. CSP crew will move forward to Mahajanga.

Experts found out that Analalava port is an open area which is not adequate to operate necropsies; then these operations will be done in Antsohihy itself, they will bring back some died whales there.

Communication

- Press release has to be updated because the Government members had no time to clear on the first version drafted on Saturday June 7.
- FANAMBY Representative at the meeting pointed out that he received many calls from reporters (RFI, CLCI,)
- The magnitude of the event becomes worldwide, and international Press put too much pressure on Madagascar, that is way the adhoc Committee members have to be quiet while receiving information which needs to be carefully handled. It might be necessary to bring the event management to higher level, such as Ministry or Government.
- WCS Representative said that on site team has been instructed to not release any information, no matter work-related concerns or difficulties, except the ones cleared by the adhoc Committee. No accusation to whoever nor on whatever until we get experts investigation results. Good communication has to be ensured.
- The adhoc Committee has no response from Jovenna though the Minister of Energy and Mines has done necessary request.