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**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN INITIATIVE
AND THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR AFRICA**

Compiled by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat

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Introduction

The AEWA Resolution 4.9, which established the AEWA African Initiative and was adopted at the 4th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP4) in 2008, aims to advance the implementation of AEWA in the African region. Furthermore, AEWA MOP5 in 2012 adopted Resolution 5.9 on the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative and the annexed AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) 2012-2014, which provides an operational guideline for the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative.

The following report covers the work of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat towards the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, including the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2017, for the period of August 2013 to May 2015. The report consists of two main sections:

- Coordination of the AEWA African Initiative and Plan of Action for Africa;
- Implementation of the AEWA African Initiative and Plan of Action for Africa;

It is worth noting that this report excludes daily routine activities carried out by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat which contribute to the implementation of the Agreement in Africa. For example, daily advisory services provided to AEWA National Focal Points (NFPs) and other stakeholders working in the region, daily correspondence as well as reporting to various AEWA bodies, donors and other partners.

It also excludes separate sections on fund-raising activities and communication or awareness-raising actions, such as developing and updating the African Initiative web pages¹ and other AEWA-related web articles. General reference to these activities is made in the relevant sections of the report.

Section 1: Coordinating the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative and AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2017

Mandate

Paragraph 2 of the AEWA Resolution 5.9 confirms the continued coordination of the AEWA African Initiative based in Bonn, strengthened by Sub-regional Focal Point Coordinators (SrFPCs) who are to receive technical support arranged by the Government of France. Article 3 of the same resolution instructs the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the AEWA Standing Committee to establish the Terms of Reference for this coordination mechanism.

1.1 Operation of the Coordination Mechanism for the AEWA African Initiative

In 2012, The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in close consultation with the AEWA Standing Committee (StC), prepared draft Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the three components of the coordination mechanism for the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative. This included ToRs for the Coordination Unit based within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in Bonn (Coordinator and Programme Assistant for the African Initiative), the SrFPCs and the Technical Support Unit (TSU) offered by the French Government to support the implementation of the AEWA PoAA.

The ToRs for the above three coordination mechanisms were approved by the AEWA StC² at its 9th Meeting in September 2013, in Trondheim, Norway.

1.1.1 The Coordination Unit within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has a mandate for a Coordinator and a Programme Assistant for the organization and implementation of activities under the AEWA African Initiative.

¹ AEWA African Initiative web pages: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/node/1935>

² Report of the 9th Meeting of the AEWA StC:
http://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa_stc9_report.pdf

Paragraphs 17 and 18 of the AEWA Resolution 5.21 approve the establishment of the post for a part time (50%) African Coordinator based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in Bonn and at P2 level within the UNEP System, meanwhile instructing the Secretariat to seek additional funds to extend this position beyond 50%.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat secured financial contributions from the Swiss Government (Federal Office for the Environment – FOEN) to supplement 50% of the funds provided in the AEWA core budget 2012-2015 for the post of a Coordinator for the African Initiative. These funds have so far been secured for the period of August 2012 to December 2015, through yearly follow-up with the Government of Switzerland.

While efforts were being made to establish the position of the Coordinator for the African Initiative within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, the activities for the coordination were outsourced for the period of January 2013 to April 2015. These were outsourced to the Friends of CMS Association (February 2013 – August 2014) and the Wild Migration NGO (September 2014 to April 2015), both non-profit-making organizations concerned with the conservation of migratory wildlife and which have been working in close collaboration with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to support the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, including the AEWA PoAA. This arrangement permitted continued support from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for coordination and implementation AEWA-related activities in the Africa region.

Meanwhile, The United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) created the post for the Coordinator of the African Initiative within the UNEP system in April 2014. A vacancy announcement was published over the period mid-April to mid-June 2014 and interviews with shortlisted candidates were conducted at the end of June 2014. The recruitment process was finalized in February 2015 and the coordinator entered on duty at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in Bonn on 4 May 2015.

In accordance with paragraph 19 of the AEWA Resolution 5.21 on financial and administrative matters, the AEWA StC assessed and approved the need to establish the post of the Programme Assistant for the African Initiative. This permitted the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to secure a financial contribution from the Government of Germany to finance the post on a part-time basis for the period of November 2012 to December 2015.

1.1.2 The Technical Support Unit (TSU)

The TSU - offered by the Government of France to support the implementation of the AEWA PoAA – is made up of a team of multi-disciplinary experts. This support, established at the end of 2012, currently constitutes experts from two countries (France and Senegal), who represent four technical partners including the Senegal Department of National Parks (DPN), the French Ministry of Environment (Directorate of Water and Biodiversity), the Tour du Valat research centre in Camargue, France and the French Hunting and Wildlife Agency (ONCFS). In line with the ToRs for the TSU, a steering group was established to facilitate planning of activities and monitor progress in the implementation of activities supported by the TSU. This Steering Group consists of:

- Representatives of the TSU;
- Representatives of the Government of France;
- Representatives of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat;
- A designated representative of the AEWA African Contracting Parties.

During this reporting period, this Steering Group has met three times: in April 2014 (Camargue), in September 2014 (Paris) and in March 2014 (Bonn). These meetings served to discuss and coordinate activities and update each other on progress made.

In order to launch the activities of the TSU, three Sub-regional National Focal Point (SrNFP) meetings, jointly organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the TSU, were conducted for the five sub-regions in Africa. These meetings aimed at identifying priority activities in the AEWA PoAA for implementation in each sub-region, particularly those which could benefit from the expertise and support of the TSU. These meetings also offered the opportunity for some National Coordinators of the International Waterbird Census (IWC) to formally meet with the AEWA National Focal Points (NFPs) with the aim of promoting collaboration at the national level for IWC activities. Finally, Sub-regional Focal Point Coordinators were elected from among the AEWA NFPs at these meetings. The following SrNFP meetings took place within the current reporting period:

- Sub-regional meeting for Southern and Eastern Africa, in October 2013 in Cape Town, South Africa.
This was supported through a voluntary contribution secured in the framework of a joint AEWA/CMS

capacity building project, funded under the ENRTP³ Strategic Cooperation Agreement (SCA) between the European Commission (EC) Directorate General (DG) for the Environment and UNEP;

- Sub-regional meeting for Central and Western Africa, in December 2013 in Dakar, Senegal⁴. This was jointly funded by the Government of France and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

The sub-regional priorities identified from within the AEWA PoAA during all three SrNFP meetings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Sub-regional priority activities identified within the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa for Central, Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western Africa

| Priority Results of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa | Sub-regions | | | | |
|---|-------------|------|-------|------|-------|
| | Central | East | South | West | North |
| 1.1.1: All CPs have launched a process to adopt appropriate national legislation protecting all Column A species, whilst 50% of CPs have adopted this legislation: | | | | | |
| 1.2.1: All CPs have identified and recognised key sites that contribute to a comprehensive network of sites for migratory waterbirds: | | | | | |
| 1.2.3: All CPs have put in place site management plans that cater for the needs of waterbird conservation, and implement them for the key network sites ⁵ | | | | | |
| 3.1.1: Increased quantity and quality of waterbird population data from Africa is available | | | | | |
| 3.1.2: Improved data on state, pressures and responses of key sites in Africa through IBA monitoring | | | | | |
| 3.2.1: Half of the CPs have year-round (as appropriate) monitoring systems in place that are well integrated into national structures and work plans ⁶ | | | | | |
| 4.3.1: At least 25% of African CPs have developed and are implementing programmes for raising awareness and understanding on waterbird conservation and AEWA | | | | | |
| CT/4.3: The Flyway Training Kit has been incorporated into the curricula of at least five wildlife training institutions in Africa | | | | | |

1.1.3 The Sub-regional Focal Point Coordinators (SrFPCs)

In accordance with Resolution 5.9, the AEWA SrFPCs are elected among the AEWA NFPs in each sub-region and are responsible for guiding the implementation of the AEWA PoAA at the sub-regional level. The draft ToRs for the SrFPCs were submitted to the African NFPs for consultation, through the African representatives on the AEWA StC prior to their approval by the 9th Meeting of the AEWA StC in September 2013. The SrNFP meetings referred to in **section 1.1.2** also saw the election of the following SrFPCs⁷:

- Eastern Africa: Mr Barirega Akankwasah, AEWA NFP for Uganda as well as StC representative for Eastern and Southern Africa and Vice Chair of the AEWA StC;
- Southern Africa: Mr Wisdom Dlamini, representing the AEWA NFP for Swaziland;
- Western Africa: Ms Germaine Ouedraogo Bouda, AEWA NFP for Burkina Faso;
- Central Africa: Mr Frédéric Lambert Bockandza-Paco, AEWA NFP for Congo;

³ ENRTP: Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy

⁴ West and Central Africa SrNFP meeting: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/central-and-western-african-sub-regions-agree-how-take-forward-implementation-aewa-plan-action>

⁵ For the Eastern and Southern African sub-regions, this expected Result (1.2.3) was selected to complement priority Result 1.2.1.

⁶ For the Eastern and Southern African sub-regions, this expected Result (3.2.1) was selected to complement priority Result 3.1.1

⁷ AEWA SrFPCs in Africa: http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/activities/african_initiative/poa_for_africa_ai/srfp_coordinators

Dr Ammar Boumezbeur (AEWA NFP for Algeria and StC regional representative for the Middle East and Northern African) elected as SrFPC during the Northern Africa SrNFP meeting in June 2013, retired from duty in February 2014. Following consultations with the AEWA implementing Agency in Algeria, it was agreed that the newly appointed NFP for Algeria, Ms. Salhi Hamida, would replace Dr Boumezbeur in all three roles – as NFP for Algeria, SrFPC and StC regional representative for the Middle East and Northern Africa. In June 2014, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat communicated this information to the AEWA Standing Committee and AEWA NFPs in the relevant sub-regions.

In order to facilitate communication between the SrFPCs and the respective AEWA NFPs in each Sub-region, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat created group email addresses for each sub-regional group. The necessary information on the group email addresses and their functioning were provided to the NFPs in July 2014. The group email addresses have been maintained to reflect changes in AEWA NFPs and their contact details.

Section 2: Implementation of the AEWA African Initiative and AEWA Plan of Action for Africa

Mandate

The AEWA Resolution 5.9 instructs the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to make every endeavour to secure the necessary financial and other resources for the implementation of the AEWA PoAA, focusing on the highest priority activities.

The AEWA PoAA 2012-2017 identifies concrete activities to be conducted in the African region, with the aim of advancing the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats. Key players to drive forward the implementation of these activities are also identified within the PoAA. This section of the report provides feedback on the implementation of activities in the AEWA PoAA for which the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat took the lead.

2.1 Activities which contribute to improving or maintaining the conservation status of waterbird species and their populations in Africa (Objective 1 of the AEWA Strategic Plan)

2.1.1 Production of a Column A population list per country

According to Result 1.1.1 of the AEWA PoAA, all African Contracting Parties should, by 2017, have launched the process to adopt appropriate national legislation to protect all Column A species, while 50 % of the African Contracting Parties should have adopted such legislation. In order to achieve this result, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat was to lead the process of developing lists of the AEWA Column A populations occurring in each African Contracting Party.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat prepared guidelines for generating national Column A population lists, based on the use of existing tools and information from AEWA and its partner organizations, including:

- A base list of all the AEWA Column A species occurring in Africa. This was generated from the Status of the populations of migratory waterbirds covered by AEWA (the AEWA Table 1), which is part of the AEWA Action Plan, annexed to the Agreement Text;
- The Critical Sites Network Tool⁸; and
- The BirdLife Data Zone⁹.

Draft national Column A population lists have thus been generated for the 35 AEWA Contracting Parties in Africa. These lists will serve as the basis for these countries to analyse any gaps in their national legislations or other national instruments or tools with regard to the conservation of AEWA Column A species. The draft lists were developed in September 2014 and are currently under review within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

⁸ CSN Tool: <http://csntool.wingsoverwetlands.org/csn/default.html#state=home>

⁹ BirdLife data base: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species/search>

It has however been proposed to finalize these lists after the AEWA MOP6, in order to incorporate the expected changes in the status of AEWA populations (from the AEWA Table 1, which will be approved by MOP6). These updated lists will be submitted to the AEWA Technical Committee (TC) and other relevant technical experts for further review, before submission to the respective Contracting Parties.

2.1.2 Development of International Species Action Plans relevant for the African region

The AEWA PoAA requests the development of International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs) for nine migratory waterbird species which occur in Africa (Bank Cormorant, Shoebill, Wattled Crane, Madagascar Pratincole, African Penguin, Cape Gannet, Blue Crane, Grey Crowned Crane and White-backed Duck).

During the current reporting period, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat organized multi-stakeholder workshops aimed at developing an ISSAP for the Grey Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum*) and an International Multi-species Action Plan (IMSAP) for Benguela upwelling system coastal seabirds (nine species). These workshops provided the opportunity for government representatives and technical experts from the key range states of the species to share information and deliberate on the conservation status and threats to the species, as well as define actions to address these threats and restore the species' populations to a favorable status. Efforts were also invested in the finalization of the ISSAP for the Shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*).

Grey Crowned Crane International Single Species Action Plan

The AEWA multi-stakeholder workshop for the Grey Crowned Crane was hosted by the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) of the Ministry of Natural Resources, from 10-13 September 2013 in Musanze, Rwanda¹⁰. The local organization of the workshop was supported by the African Crane Conservation Programme - a partnership between the International Crane Foundation (ICF) and Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) - in close collaboration with the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) and Der Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU – the BirdLife Partner in Germany).

Nine out of the 15 Ranges States for the species were represented (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Other partner organizations which participated included the African Association for Zoos and Aquaria, BirdLife International Africa Partnership Secretariat, EWT, ICF, and NABU. The draft ISSAP has been developed and has undergone a highly consultative review process involving the species' Range States, the AEWA TC and other experts. It will be presented to the AEWA MOP6 for review and endorsement.

International Multi-Species Action Plan for Benguela Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of Namibia organized a multi-stakeholder workshop aimed at developing an IMSAP for Benguela Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds. The species covered by this plan are the African Penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), Crowned Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax coronatus*), Cape Gannet (*Morus capensis*), Cape Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax capensis*), Bank Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax neglectus*), Damara Tern (*Sterna balaenarum*), African Oystercatcher (*Haematopus moquini*), Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) and Swift Tern (*Thalasseus bergii*). This workshop took place from 9-12 September 2014 in Swakopmund, Namibia and brought together government representatives and experts from the key Ranges States, including South Africa, Namibia and Angola as well as other stakeholders. This is the first IMSAP developed in the framework of AEWA. It covers several priority species and their populations identified under the revised version of the AEWA Table 1, adopted by the AEWA MOP5. This includes three out of the nine priority species for the development of action plans under the AEWA PoAA.

Shoebill International Single Species Action Plan

Following the multi-stakeholder consultation workshop for the development of the Shoebill ISSAP in October 2012¹¹, there were intensive consultations for the drafting of the ISSAP, including experts from the species Range States, the AEWA TC and other experts. The 9th Meeting of the AEWA StC (September 2013) approved this ISSAP on an interim basis, pending final approval at the AEWA MOP6.

¹⁰ Grey Crowned Crane action planning workshop: <http://www.unep-awea.org/en/news/progress-conservation-grey-crowned-crane>

¹¹ Shoebill action planning workshop: <http://www.unep-awea.org/en/news/shoebill-action-planning-process-launched-workshop-uganda>

2.2 Activities which contribute to increasing knowledge about species and their populations, flyways and threats to them, as a basis for conservation action (Objective 3 of the AEWA Strategic Plan)

2.2.1 Supporting the International Waterbird Census

The IWC, coordinated by Wetlands International, provides an international framework for the acquisition and management of waterbird data globally. It has contributed to providing valuable information for assessing the status and trends of AEWA populations and their sites world-wide, including in Africa. For its functioning, the IWC relies on National IWC Coordinators in each country, who in turn work with a network of professional and amateur bird counters, to provide waterbird count data to the scheme. Supporting the IWC at various levels is therefore an important means for improving the quality and quantity of waterbird population data.

In this light, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has worked towards fostering collaborating between partners working at different levels of the data collection and management under the IWC (as recommended in Action 3.1.1 (a) of the AEWA PoAA). This included initiating and/or improving contact between the AEWA implementing agencies and the National IWC Coordinators, in the framework of the Sub-regional National Focal Point meetings which were jointly organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the TSU (see **section 1.1.2** of this report for details). National IWC Coordinators participated in these meetings alongside the AEWA NFPs and presented the national status of the IWC for different countries (site coverage, observers' network and coordination actions), shared experience, indicated key problems faced and proposed possible solutions to address these for better future management of the programme.

Some of the key problems common to most of the sub-regions included inadequate equipment, lack of capacity building programmes, inadequate recognition of waterbirds and wetlands within some government administration and the public, lack of interactive databases and increasing insecurity in some areas. It was therefore no surprise that Result 3.1.1 of the AEWA PoAA, "*Increased quantity and quality of waterbird population data from Africa is available*" was unanimously identified as a sub-regional priority by all five sub-regions in Africa.

2.2.2 Encouraging the use of the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) monitoring methodology

The BirdLife International Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) programme aims to identify, monitor and protect a network of sites which contribute to the global conservation of birds and other wildlife. Similar to the IWC programme, the BirdLife IBA programme is coordinated and managed at the national level by National BirdLife Partners, while the BirdLife International Secretariat leads on the international level, as well as addresses issues in countries which do not have a BirdLife partner. In order to assure consistency among designated IBAs and permit comparability between IBAs at national, regional and global level, the programme uses standardized IBA criteria for the identification, monitoring and update of IBAs.

The BirdLife IBA programme is clearly recognized under AEWA as a key contributor to the network of critical sites for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. Data available from this scheme feeds into the Critical Sites Network (CSN) Tool, developed under the UNEP-GEF Wings Over Wetlands African-Eurasian Flyway Project and which brings together existing information on key sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds. According to Action 3.1.2 (a) of the AEWA PoAA, AEWA Contracting Parties in Africa are to be familiarised with IBA monitoring methodologies and this monitoring is to be initiated in at least 20% of the Contracting Parties.

Key aspects of the BirdLife International IBA monitoring methodology were included in a training of trainers (ToT) course on the flyway approach to waterbirds and wetland conservation, organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. This ToT took place in Luanda, Angola in January 2014 and was organized for 21 experts from the five Portuguese-speaking African countries (Luanda, Angola, January 2014). See **section 2.4.3** of this report for details on this ToT course. One of the key components of the ToT was IBA monitoring: trainees were introduced to the IBA monitoring scheme, provided with the IBA monitoring sheets and led through practical field exercises on identifying waterbirds and site status, threats to the sites and species, and conservation actions which respond to the threats. Use of the IBA technology in the countries concerned has thus been promoted, with a view to improving data on the state of key sites for migratory waterbirds in Africa, the pressures they are subject to and the responses in terms of conservation.

2.3 Activities which contribute to improving communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) about migratory waterbirds, their flyways, roles in poverty alleviation, threats and conservation measures (Objective 4 of the AEWA Strategic Plan)

2.3.1 Promoting the celebration of World Migratory Bird Day in Africa

The World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign is a joint AEWA and CMS initiative aimed at passing on a specific annual message on migratory waterbird conservation to a wide range of audiences in both Contracting Parties and non-Party Range States. This key global awareness-raising tool used in the framework of AEWA has been successful in the African region, with an increasing number of participating organizations organising an increasing number of events every year.

In response to the WMBD campaign efforts by the Joint Information Management, Communications and Outreach Unit of the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats, the African region registered up to 61 events from 21 countries for the 2014 WMBD Campaign. Meanwhile, 27 activities are currently recorded in 18 African countries, for the 2015 WMBD campaign, with these figures expected to increase with feedback on implemented activities events.

In order to further promote WMBD in Africa, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat supported the organization of a central 2014 WMBD event for in Africa. This took place on 28 August 2014 at Ngare Sero Village, at the shores of Lake Natron, Tanzanian, under the global WMBD theme “*Destination Flyways: Migratory Birds and Tourism*”, in connection with the Destination Flyways Initiative coordinated by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat received support from BirdLife International, the Tanzania Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) and local authorities for the organization of this event. It brought together a diverse audience ranging from representatives from national governmental and non-governmental institutions, local community leaders, National Park Authorities, private companies, school children, the general public and the AEWA National Focal Point from neighboring Kenya.

The lively and inspiring activities highlighted the importance of safeguarding the sites of importance for waterbirds, meanwhile emphasizing the importance of these sites for the livelihood of the surrounding local communities. One result of the WMBD event was a pledge from the Government of Tanzania to accord the highest possible protection status to the Lake Natron Site, a key breeding ground for the Lesser Flamingo and an important tourism destination nationally, regionally and globally. The event was supported by a financial contribution from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB).

Equally thanks to a financial contribution from BMUB, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is currently supporting the celebration of the 2015 WMBD in various AEWA Contracting Parties in Africa, under the global theme: “*Energy – Make it bird-friendly*”. This activity is being coordinated with the support of the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat and aims at providing a maximum of 500 Euros per country, to support both Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations in commemorating the 2015 WMBD celebration.

A 2014 WMBD event was also sponsored in the framework of an AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF) project on the conservation of the Lesser Flamingo in Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area and adjacent buffer zones, approved under the 2012 SGF project cycle. Among other awareness-raising activities conducted under this project, a national awareness-raising event was hosted on 10 May 2014 in the Katwe-Kabatooro town council in Uganda to commemorate the 2014 WMBD campaign. It was organized by NatureUganda in close collaboration with the Katwe Tourism Information Centre (KATIC - a local conservation group that concentrates on guiding tourism and raising awareness on conservation issues).

2.4 Activities which contribute to improving the capacity of African Range States towards international cooperation for the conservation of migratory waterbird species and their flyways (Objective 5 of the AEWA Strategic Plan)

2.4.1 Expanding membership of AEWA in the African region

Paragraph 6 of the AEWA Resolution 5.9 calls on the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to continue to put emphasis on the recruitment of new Contracting Parties in Africa. The AEWA PoAA further requires the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to take the lead in organizing sub-regional and national accession workshops to facilitate new membership from Africa.

AEWA accession workshop in Botswana:

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, with the support of BirdLife Botswana and the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), organized a promotion workshop to facilitate the accession of Botswana to AEWA. The workshop took place from 5-6 November 2013 in Gaborone, Botswana and brought together a total of 24 persons, representing various governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the national accession process and subsequent implementation of AEWA.

The workshop provided an opportunity for discussions on the implications of the country's accession to AEWA and resulted in a road map and declaration, signed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, the Director of BirdLife Botswana and the then Acting AEWA Executive Secretary, thereby engaging their respective institutions in facilitating the next steps in the accession process. In the margins of this workshop, individual meetings were held with some senior government officials involved in the accession process, in order to raise their awareness of AEWA and engage their support for the accession process.

These activities yielded significant progress in the process of Botswana's accession to AEWA, in particular, accession to AEWA has since been endorsed by the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Coordinating Committee (in November 2014) and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (in December 2014). A draft Cabinet Memorandum has also been prepared by DWNP and BirdLife Botswana for review by all Ministries and subsequent submission for Cabinet approval in the first half of 2015.

Accession missions in Africa:

Further efforts to promote the accession of new Contracting Parties from Africa include accession missions to some non-Party Range States, conducted mostly in the margins of other AEWA activities. These include:

Angola: In January 2014, a representative from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat met with the AEWA Contact Person (Head of the Department of Biodiversity Management) from the Angolan Ministry of Environment. This was conducted in the margins of the AEWA Training of Trainers course on the flyway approach which took place in the country. This provided updated information on the status of the accession process and permitted discussions on the possibilities of pushing the accession process forward. Contact has been maintained with the country to keep the momentum gained.

Cameroon: In June 2014, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the TSU conducted a joint mission to promote the accession of Cameroon to AEWA, among other activities. Meetings were held in the country's capital city, Yaoundé, with the Cameroon Prime Minister and Head of Government, the Secretary General at the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), the Assistant Director for Hunting and Wildlife in MINFOF and other key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders¹². This provided information on the status of the accession process and a common agreement by all stakeholders to support and push forward the accession process. Constant contact has been maintained with MINFOF which is working closely with the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX), to push forward the accession process.

Namibia: In September 2014, a representative from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat met with the Permanent Secretary at the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and other key governmental and non-governmental officials who will be involved in the accession process. The meeting took place in Windhoek, in the margins of an AEWA multi-species action planning-workshop for the Benguela upwelling system coastal seabirds. The main outcome was the need for the government of Namibia to re-launch the accession process in close collaboration with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

¹² Cameroon accession mission: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/node/2617>

New Contracting Parties recruited from Africa:

In general, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has initiated and/or maintained and/or improved contact with a good number of non-Party Range States with the aim of pushing forward the process of accession in these countries. As a result, the following four African countries acceded to AEWA during the current reporting period, resulting in a total of 35 out of the 74 AEWA Party Range States (47%) being from Africa:

| No. | Country | Date of entry into force of AEWA |
|------------|----------------|---|
| 1. | Burkina Faso | 01-10-2013 |
| 2. | Rwanda | 01-09-2014 |
| 3. | Burundi | 01-10-2014 |
| 4. | Mauritania | 01-05-2015 |

Furthermore, for some countries, significant progress has been registered in the accession process. These include Angola, Botswana and Comoros.

2.4.2 Operation of the AEWA Small Grants Fund

The Small Grants Fund (SGF) is a key AEWA funding mechanism providing financial support for the implementation of the Agreement to developing countries and those with economies in transition. Following the launch of this programme in 2010, it has been implemented exclusively in the African region, given the limited funds available for its operation and the restriction of available funds for use in the African region only. Funds from this scheme have supported both governmental and non-governmental organizations to conduct a wide range of projects, targeting various audiences and thereby strengthening the network of organizations and individuals concerned with migratory waterbird conservation at the national level.

The kinds of activities funded over the current reporting period include support for the conservation of particular AEWA species and their habitats, supply of optical and other technical equipment to support monitoring and survey of waterbird species and their habitats, training and awareness-raising for various target groups, and support for the livelihood of local communities which depend on waterbird species and their habitats for subsistence.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat was involved in running the 2013 and 2014 SGF project cycles as well as monitoring the implementation of ongoing SGF projects from earlier cycles. During this period, a total of 30,393 EUR were granted towards supporting two projects in two African Contracting Parties. Meanwhile, six SGF projects were successfully completed.

The 2013 SGF cycle:

This project cycle was launched in September 2013 and involved the three phase evaluation process, including a pre-assessment by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and consultations with the AEWA TC (in February 2014) and the AEWA StC (in March 2014). Out of the 19 proposals received, six were eligible for evaluation under the AEWA SGF, five of which were evaluated as eligible for funding under the programme. A total of 30,393 EUR available under the programme went into supporting the implementation of two projects in Gabon and Guinea, which both aimed at improving national capacity for the conservation and management of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.

Support to these projects was made possible thanks to the SGF allocation in the AEWA core budget and a voluntary financial contribution from Mr. Sergey Dereliev of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The implementation of the project in Gabon is underway. Activities under the Guinea project were put on hold, from September 2014 to January 2015, due to the Ebola outbreak in the country. Activities under this project resumed in Guinea in January 2015, and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is currently working on extending the project implementation period to permit successful completion of the project activities.

The 2014 SGF cycle:

Launched in July 2014, the call for proposals yielded a total of 23 project proposals from 14 countries, 11 of which were eligible for evaluation under the AEWA SGF. The three phase evaluation process is currently underway and the pre-assessed proposals will be submitted to the AEWA TC and subsequently the AEWA StC in the second quarter of 2015.

Completed Small Grants Funds projects:

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has also closely monitored the implementation of ongoing SGF projects, some of which have meanwhile been successfully completed. These include:

- The 2010 SGF project on the strengthening monitoring of breeding colonies of waterbirds on the Bijol Islands in Gambia¹³, successfully completed in June 2014;
- The 2010 SGF project on surveying the status of, and researching on the White-winged Flufftail in Ethiopia, successfully completed in November 2014;
- The 2010 SGF project on the assessment of breeding waterbird populations in ten Red Sea Islands in Egypt, successfully completed in January 2015;
- The 2011 SGF project on setting priorities for, and promoting the conservation of migratory waterbird species at key coastal wetlands in Ghana¹⁴, was successfully completed in November 2014;
- The two 2012 SGF projects in Uganda¹⁵ and Senegal¹⁶ were successfully completed in August and September 2014 respectively. These include a project on the sustainable management of the Tocc Tocc Community Natural Reserve located in northern Senegal and the other on the conservation of the Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*) in the Queen Elizabeth conservation area in South-Western Uganda.

Revision of the Small Grants Fund operational guidelines and application forms

Based on experience gained during the early cycles of the AEWA SGF and feedback from applicants and other stakeholders, a first revision of the operational guidelines and forms for the SGF programme was prepared by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and approved at the 9th Meeting of the AEWA StC in September 2013. The revision aimed at clarifying the information provided to proponents in the guidelines as well as data requested in the application and assessment forms. A further revision, aimed among others to streamline the SGF forms and guidelines with new UNEP administrative and reporting procedures, was approved by the AEWA StC in June 2014.

2.4.3 Improving national capacity for the implementation of AEWA in Africa

Capacity building - aimed at improving national capacity for the implementation of AEWA, for different target groups and covering different issues - is reflected in most of the activity areas of the AEWA PoAA. Over the period of August 2013 to May 2015, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in collaboration with partners working in the African region, prepared and conducted training courses targeting both technical experts and administrative personnel involved in the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in Africa.

Training of administrative personnel involved in the implementation of AEWA:

According to Result 5.6.1 of the AEWA PoAA, capacity is to be built for AEWA NFPs and Technical Focal Points on the implementation of AEWA, through development of a training module and organization of training workshops.

To this end, the UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/CMS Secretariats jointly developed a training manual for the NFPs of CMS, AEWA and other CMS Instruments (referred to as the CMS Family National Focal Points Manual¹⁷). This manual aims at guiding these NFPs on their roles and responsibilities towards effective implementation of these international treaties. It is complemented by an e-community¹⁸ which provides the CMS Family NFPs with a forum for communication and sharing of information and expertise. Both the CMS Family Manual and

¹³ Completed SGF project in Gambia:

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/aewa-sgf-project-successfully-completed-gambia>

¹⁴ Completion of the Ghana SGF project:

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/successful-completion-aewa-sgf-project-ghana>

¹⁵ Completed SGF project in Uganda:

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/lesser-flamingo-conservation-project-successfully-completed-uganda>

¹⁶ Completed SGF project in Senegal:

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/boost-waterbird-conservation-project-senegal-aewa-small-grants-fund>

¹⁷ CMS Family Manual for NFPs: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/publication/manual-national-focal-points-cms-and-its-instruments>

¹⁸ CMS Family E-community: <http://www.migratoryspecies.org/en/e-community>

the CMS Family e-community were developed through a highly consultative process that involved CMS Family NFPs from the different regions including Africa, partner organizations (Ramsar Secretariat, BirdLife International and Wetlands International), CMS Family staff members and other stakeholders.

The final draft manual was tested for the first time during a joint workshop for National Focal Points for CMS, AEWA and some other CMS Instruments. The workshop took place in Cape Town, South Africa, from 29-31 October 2013 and brought together some 40 NFPs or their representatives from 26 African Contracting Parties. The workshop made use of various methods including presentations, role play exercises and field excursions, aimed at improving the capacity of these NFPs for effective implementation of the respective treaties. It also provided the opportunity for further review of the manual by this key target audience.

The development of the CMS Family Manual and e-community and the associated training workshop were made possible thanks to a voluntary contribution secured by the UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/CMS Secretariats under the ENRTP¹⁹ Strategic Cooperation Agreement (SCA) between the European Commission (EC) and UNEP, in the framework of a capacity building project jointly implemented by the CMS and AEWA Secretariats and focusing on the African region.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat hopes to further use the CMS Family NFP manual for training purposes in the margins of a three-day African preparatory meeting for the 6th Session of the AEWA MOP (AEWA pre-MOP6), planned for August 2015 in South Africa. It will bring together AEWA National Focal Points from the 35 African Contracting Parties, in order to enable them to deliberate on key issues which will be addressed by the AEWA MOP6 and which will be of relevance for the region. It will also permit them to negotiate common regional positions to be presented at the MOP, thereby offering the possibility for an improved participation of the region at the MOP. The AEWA African pre-MOP6 meeting is being organized back to back with a one-day, joint CMS/AEWA Southern African sub-regional workshop on the prevention of poisoning for waterbirds.

Preparations for these meetings are underway and funds for the meeting were secured from the joint AEWA/CMS ENRTP capacity building project, as well as from the Governments of Switzerland and South Africa.

Training of technical experts involved in the implementation of AEWA

Complementary Result 4.1 of the AEWA PoAA recommends the organization of sub-regional ToTs to promote the flyway approach to the conservation and wise-use of waterbirds and wetlands.

In the framework of the joint AEWA and CMS capacity building project funded under the ENRTP SCA between the EC and UNEP, an AEWA ToT workshop was organized for technical experts from the five Portuguese-speaking African countries (also see **section 2.2.2**). The workshop was organized in close collaboration with the capacity building component of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) project and the Angolan Ministry of Environment and took place from 27-31 January 2014 in Luanda, Angola. It brought together 21 Participants from the five Lusophone African countries (Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe).

The key training tools used for this workshop were the Flyway Training Kit (FTK) developed under the UNEP/GEF African-Eurasian Wings Over Wetlands Flyway Project (WOW project), the ONCFS training module on waterbirds survey and monitoring in sub-Saharan Africa and the BirdLife International IBA monitoring methodology. The workshop brought together technical experts from various fields such as ornithology, environmental education, biodiversity conservation and wildlife conservation and management. Various means such as PowerPoint presentations, indoor and outdoor role play exercises, group exercises and field excursions were used to improve the participants' capacity for waterbird and wetlands conservation using the flyway approach. The workshop also provided the participants with skills in designing and conducting similar training courses at the national and regional levels. Workshop participants also received some basic field equipment such as field guides, FTKs and binoculars and telescopes, which will contribute to supporting their activities of monitoring and survey of waterbirds and their habitats. This was the first AEWA-related training organized in the Portuguese language and participants hoped for future support from AEWA on training courses, documents and other tools in this language.

¹⁹ ENRTP: Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy

Furthermore, in June 2014 the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat supported the TSU in a joint mission to Cameroon to promote the incorporation of the FTK into the curriculum of the Garoua Wildlife College, as requested in action CT/4.3 (a) of the AEWA PoAA. The first part of the mission at the school's campus in Garoua contributed to increase awareness of the school's administration on the importance of these modules for improving their training programme. It also helped to identify key areas for support required by the institution, which had recently undergone a change in its administration at the time of the visit. Meetings with government officials in the country's capital permitted lobbying for this cause (see **section 2.4.1** for details on persons met). Further joint efforts with the TSU are foreseen to promote collaboration between the main wildlife training institutions in Africa in the area of waterbird and wetland conservation (i.e. the Garoua Wildlife College, College of African Wildlife Management Mweka, Tanzania, and Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute).