



15th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
11 - 13 December 2019, Bristol, United Kingdom

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

Introduction

This report covers the activities of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat regarding the coordination and implementation of the AEWA African Initiative (AI) and related AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) 2019-2027 for the period of 15 December 2018 (after the AI report to the 7th Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP7) to 30 October 2019.

Daily routine activities of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat which contribute towards the implementation of the African Initiative are not specifically mentioned in this report. Fundraising efforts relating to the AI and collaboration with partners are described in each relevant section below, rather than in separate sections.

1. Coordination of the AEWA African Initiative

1.1. AEWA African Initiative Unit

The coordination within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat continued to be led by the African Initiative Unit which consists of the Coordinator for the African Initiative (P-2 Officer) supported by a Programme Assistant (G-5). As per Res. 7.12, the AEWA core budget 2019-2021 allocates 50% of the funding required for both positions while an additional 50% (P-2) and 30% (G-5) are to be provided through voluntary financial contributions, in order to be able to maintain the two AI positions at the required minimum level of 100% full-time (P2) and 80% part-time (G5).

Providing the two AI positions at this level has, however, proved a challenge. Generous voluntary financial contributions received from the European Commission in 2018 and from the Governments of Luxembourg and Germany in 2019 have contributed to supplementing both positions up to their current level of functioning. However, both positions are still facing a significant funding gap and are in urgent need of voluntary financial contributions in order to be maintained at 100% and 80% respectively until the end of 2019 and for the rest of the triennium (i.e. in 2020 and 2021). Further details are available in the Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative Issues (document StC 15.8) and the Report of the Secretariat (document StC 15.5).

1.2. Technical Support Unit

The Technical Support Unit (TSU), a multi-disciplinary team of experts offered by the Government of France continues to provide technical support to the African Range States in various areas. A recent

video released by the TSU, “Waterbird Monitoring in Africa: The Chad Experience¹”, was promoted on the AEWA website.

1.3. Sub-Regional Focal Point Coordinators

Following the revision of the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the AEWA Sub-Regional Focal Point Coordinators (SRFPCs) in Africa², adopted through Resolution 7.1, new SRFPCs have been in place in four of the five sub-regions in Africa since MOP7 (i.e. Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western Africa). As per the revised ToRs, the nominated AEWA Standing Committee (StC) regional representatives for these four regions by default assumed the role of SRFPC. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been in close contact with the NFPs of the Central African sub-region to support the process of nominating their SRFPC, given that the region has no StC regional representative.

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

2.1. Reporting on the implementation of the AEWA PoAA 2019-2027

Resolution 7.1 of MOP7 instructed the Standing Committee, working with the Technical Committee and the Secretariat, to establish a module on the implementation of the Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027 in the national report format and to integrate the module in time for the reporting cycle to MOP8. The process of developing the PoAA reporting module has been initiated by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, and an initial draft will be shared with the AEWA StC and TC by the end of 2019.

2.2. Species conservation and monitoring

Thanks to funding received under the European Commission (EC) Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) Thematic Programme Cooperation Agreement with UNEP, the Secretariat, in collaboration with BirdLife South Africa and the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA), has initiated activities to develop an implementation plan on the sustainable use of the Berga wetland in Ethiopia and initiate the process of its designation as a Protected Area. To this end, a site visit and meetings with community leaders and stakeholders took place in September 2019 with the outcomes discussed and reviewed in the framework of the 3rd Meeting of the AEWA White-winged Flufftail International Working Group (IWG) in from 5-7 November 2019 in Dullstroom, South Africa.

The EC GPGC funding, as well as co-funding by the Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, enabled the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in collaboration with the African Crane Conservation Programme (ACCP), to organize the first Meeting of the AEWA International Working Group for the Grey Crowned-crane (GCC IWG), from 24 to 26 July 2019 in Entebbe, Uganda. The meeting brought together governmental representatives and experts from the ten principal range states for the species as well as other key partners. It resulted in a draft implementation plan covering the period up to 2022, with specific national activities complementing wider regional and international tasks³.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been collaborating with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) in the framework of their Bio-Bridge Initiative (BBI), to support the transfer of knowledge and expertise to local experts in Senegal and Mauritania, regarding satellite tagging and ringing of Lesser Flamingos, and subsequent monitoring of their spatial and temporal

¹ <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/new-film-waterbird-monitoring-africa-chad-experience>

² AEWA SRFPCs: http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/activities/african_initiative/poa_for_africa_ai/srfp_coordinators

³ <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/further-progress-made-planning-conservation-action-grey-crowned-crane>

distribution in breeding and non-breeding sites. The project will be implemented in collaboration with Senegal's Directorate of National Parks (DPN), the French-based research institute Tour du Valat and BirdLife International and will benefit from cooperation with the Avian Migration Aerial Surface Space (AMASS) project led by NASA.

2.3. Operation of the AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF)

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat monitored and provided guidance towards the implementation of the last ongoing SGF projects from the 2014 and 2015 project cycles, as well as provided support towards all required administrative and technical processes. In 2019, three SGF projects from the 2015 cycle were completed (in Kenya⁴, Nigeria and Zimbabwe) as well as one from the 2014 project cycle (in Côte d'Ivoire). At the end of 2018, the 2015 cycle project from Mauritania⁵ was completed. All SGF projects have thus been completed.

With no funding earmarked in the AEWA Core Budget towards SGF projects since 2016 and no voluntary contributions received to this end, no new SGF project cycle can currently be run by the Secretariat.

2.4. Expanding membership to AEWA in Africa

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat continued to promote the accession of new Contracting Parties, with a focus on the Central and Southern African regions, as well as on Portuguese-speaking African countries, where major gaps in membership to AEWA in Africa exist.

Central African Republic joined AEWA on 1 January 2019⁶ while Malawi became Party no. 80 to AEWA on 1 September 2019⁷.

The Secretariat has been closely following up with the Republic of Cameroon where major progress on accession was made in July 2019, when Parliament passed a law authorising the President of the Republic to proceed with the country's accession to AEWA.

For Angola, the request for accession to AEWA was at an advanced stage at the level of the National Assembly in October 2019.

In order to promote accession, the Secretariat has also been in contact with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Zambia.

2.5. Capacity-Building and CEPA in Africa

Target 5.3.c of the PoAA recommends to "organise and deliver appropriate training of trainers at the regional or flyway level, making use of existing and adaptable tools". In this regard, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat organized a five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop on flyway conservation, jointly with the Directorate General of Water, Forests and Hunting (DGEFC) of Benin, and in cooperation with the Ramsar Secretariat and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI). The training took place from 6 to 10 May 2019 in Benin. It was made possible thanks to financial and in-kind support from the EC GPGC, the WSFI and the Government of Benin⁸.

⁴ <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/aewa-sgf-contributes-increased-capacity-conservation-rift-valley-lakes-kenya>

⁵ AEWA SGF – Mauritania: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/capacity-waterbird-monitoring-reinforced-mauritania>

⁶ Accession of Central African Republic to AEWA: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/central-african-republic-accedes-aewa-party-no-78>

⁷ Accession of Malawi to AEWA: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/malawi-%E2%80%93-party-no-80-aewa>

⁸ AEWA flyway ToT workshop, Benin: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/training-trainers-flyway-conservation>

Forty-four technical experts from 18 Francophone West and Central Africa range states were trained, as well as from four relevant regional training institutions in these countries. The Flyway Training Kit (FTK) developed under the UNEP/GEF African-Eurasian Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Flyway Project, was the main training tool, complemented by the toolkit on bird identification and counting developed by the French National Agency for Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS). Lectures, practical exercises and games, group sessions, case studies, role play exercises and field excursions were used to deliver the different components of the FTK including the flyway concept, bird migration, Communication, Education and Public Awareness, as well as monitoring, conservation, management and action planning for birds and their sites using the flyway approach. In the framework of the training, representatives of each participating country developed project concepts for the future design and delivery of national courses on flyway conservation, as a basis for future fundraising in this regard.

As a direct outcome of the training, Senegal organised a five-day training course in October 2019 on waterbird identification, counting and the sustainable management of waterbirds and their habitats, delivered at Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, and involving some 25 participants.