



16th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
4-6 May 2021, Virtual Meeting Format

**UNEP INFORMATION DOCUMENT
FOR THE 16th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE AGREEMENT
ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS
(AEWA)**

This Information Document is in support to the long-standing and well-established synergetic cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). UNEP has continued to strengthen its programmatic support to the work of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and its agreements. The outcomes of the meetings of the governing bodies of UNEP and the CMS family provide the overarching framework for this mutually beneficial cooperation.

The overall theme of UNEA-5 is “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals”. The theme calls for strengthened action to protect and restore nature and the nature-based solutions to achieve the SDGs in its three dimensions (social, economic and environmental). It also provides an opportunity for Member States and stakeholders to take ambitious steps towards building back better and greener by ensuring that investments in economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic contribute to sustainable development.

Due to the specific context of the COVID-19 pandemic and based on consultations with Member States and stakeholders, it was decided that UNEA-5 would take place in a two-step approach in two phases. While the first phase (UNEA-5.1) was conducted virtually on 22-26 February 2021 with focus on urgent and procedural decisions, the second phase (UNEA-5.2) will be held on substantive matters in-person session in February 2022.

1) Decisions adopted at UNEA-5.1 can be downloaded here under ‘[Adopted decisions from online UNEA-5.1](#)’.

Firstly, UNEA-5.1 adopted a decision on the Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions. With regards to trust funds in support of the regional seas programmes, conventions, protocols and special funds, UNEA noted and approved the extension of funds as requested notably by the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation (I assume, of Migratory Species). These trust funds include the two funds related to AEWA: The core budget called AWL – General Trust Fund for AEWA, and the AVL fund – General Trust Fund for Voluntary Contributions to AEWA, which were both extended up to 31 December 2024.

Secondly, the UNEA adopted a new Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2025 and programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022-2023. UNEA-5.1 approved appropriations for the Environment Fund in the amount of USD 200 million for the years 2022-2023. Its budget envelope remains stable compared to 2020-2021.

Thirdly, UNEA decided to resume the fifth session of UNEA for an in-person meeting from 28 February to 2 March 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya, where substantive items will be considered and relevant resolutions and outcome documents adopted.

2) Focus on UNEP and Environmental Governance & Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025

In response to UNEA decision 4/1, UNEP submitted the ‘[Proposed Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025: Report of the Executive Director](#)’ ([UNEP/EA.5/3/Rev.1](#)) that maps out actions needed to reshape consumption and production patterns towards sustainability and to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The medium-term strategy (MTS) seeks to provide a stronger, more coordinated and mutually supportive environmental action.

The first introductory part of the MTS gives an analysis of the negative impact of a rapidly deteriorating environment on human development, as well as of the MTS’ contribution towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The second and core part of the MTS presents UNEP’s focus, articulated around three principal areas of action also called thematic subprograms (climate action, nature action, and chemicals and pollution action) underpinned by two foundational subprograms (science policy and environmental governance) and facilitated by two enabling subprograms (finance and economic transformation, and digital transformation).

With regards to Environmental Governance, UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 notably focuses on supporting countries in developing and implementing environmental policies, strengthening the role of UNEA as the highest global environmental decision-making body to deliver on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, and enhancing cooperation with the MEAs. The later includes cooperation with the respective secretariats and bodies of the 15 MEAs UNEP administers, and support for the development for the agreed post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

MEAs “multiplier effect” and inclusive multilateralism for stronger global environmental governance are considered by UNEP as two of the four levers of change, alongside with the United Nations reform process and innovative communication for environmental advocacy. UNEP will promote coherent and synergized cooperation across all MEAs – recognized as the foundational stones of the work of UNEP – and enhance UNEA’s relationship with MEAs while respecting their legal autonomy.

3) Focus on UNEP, Environmental Governance and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 2022-2023

UNEP also submitted the ‘[Proposed Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023: Report of the Executive Director](#)’ ([UNEP/EA.5/3/Add.1](#)) in response to UNEA decision 4/1, that presents UNEP results framework, leadership and programme management, budget and resource mobilization for the next two years. More specifically, the document gives four key indicators measuring governance performance to deliver climate, nature, and chemicals and pollution outcomes, as follow:

- (i) Number of countries supported by UNEP under the Montevideo Programme in developing and implementing environmental rule of law and related technical and institutional capacities to address internationally agreed environmental goals,
- (ii) Number of international legal agreements or instruments advanced or developed with UNEP support to address internationally agreed environmental goals,
- (iii) Number of plans, approaches, strategies, policies, action plans or budgeting processes of entities at the national, regional and global levels that include environmental goals as a result of UNEP support,
- (iv) Number of entities at the national, regional or global levels that UNEP has supported in developing integrated approaches and tools for enhanced coordination, cooperation and synergies for the coherent implementation of MEAs.

With respect to UNEP leadership and programme management, UNEP is expected to attract interest from key-decision makers and stakeholders, including from MEAs. To measure this, one of the four policymaking organs key performance indicators is the ‘Sustained engagement of Member States and United Nations representatives, in particular from the secretariats of MEAs in the Environment Assembly’. Performance will be measured by the number of representatives from secretariats of MEAs attending UNEA sessions.

4) Pre-session Working Documents and Information Documents on Biodiversity, Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and their corresponding Trust Funds, and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Both working documents and information documents give an update on UNEP's progress in the implementation of UNEA-4 resolutions. For more information on relevant UNEA-4 resolutions, please refer to 'UNEP Information Document for the 15th meeting of the Standing Committee of AEWA, 11-13 December 2019, Bristol, United Kingdom'. To access all progress reports on UNEA-4 resolutions mentioned in the later document, follow the links provided below for UNEA-5 'pre-session' documents.

'Pre-session: Working documents for UNEA 5' are reports on progress achieved in the implementation of 21 resolutions of the Assembly adopted mostly during UNEA-4 but also at UNEA-3 and UNEA-2. These progress reports – submitted by the Executive Director of UNEP to UNEA – will be reviewed at the annual subcommittee meetings in 2021 and action will be taken at UNEA-5.2. Of these 21 progress reports, 3 are particularly relevant for AEWA, as they give an update on action taken on biodiversity, wildlife, and marine litter:

- (i) **UNEP/EA.5/8 [Progress on the implementation of resolution 4/6 on marine litter and microplastics: Report of the Executive Director](#)** details action taken by UNEP, which supported the coordination of actors through the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, helped regions to develop their regional marine litter plan, provided capacity-building through the training-of-trainers programme for the monitoring and assessment of marine litter and microplastics, and is currently working on an assessment on sources, pathways, and hazard of litter, including plastic litter and microplastics pollution (assessment that will be made available for UNEA-5.2).
- (ii) **UNEP/EA.5/10 [Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/10 on innovation on biodiversity and land degradation: Report of the Executive Director](#)** notably presents key progress made on advancing the global biodiversity agenda (A), and promoting human-wildlife coexistence (B).
On item (A), UNEP: 1) provided technical assistance to 137 countries on national biodiversity reports (measuring achievements of Aichi Biodiversity Targets) resulting in the submission of 6 reports, 2) supported the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in making progress on the post-2020 biodiversity framework including processing the peer review with the help of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), 3) supported the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity held in September 2020, 4) worked with other UN entities and Member States to advance synergies across MEAs, 5) worked with the support of the European Union and Switzerland to develop the Data Reporting Tool for MEAs. This tool provides a private and secure platform for Parties to share national data and monitoring and reporting synergies across the biodiversity-related conventions. On item (B), UNEP: 1) hosted the inaugural Africa Wildlife Economy Summit in June 2019 with the support of the African Union and Zimbabwe, 2) worked on wildlife conservation areas based on local shareholder knowledge in Southern Africa and the Congo basin, 3) undertook a scientific assessment on preventing [zoonotic diseases](#) and the potential next pandemic.
- (iii) **UNEP/EA.5/21 [Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/14 on illegal trade in wildlife and wild products: Report of the Executive Director](#)** focuses on actions undertaken by UNEP to fight against illegal trade and trafficking in wildlife and its products in collaboration with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The report highlights UNEP's efforts to update online resource to access information on species listed on CITES, CMS and the EU wildlife trade regulations through [Species+](#). It also presents new global spatial data portals supported by UNEP-WCMC to assess threats to wildlife and biodiversity and facilitate policy-making: UN Biodiversity Lab, the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species website.