



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

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31 January – 01 February 2017, Paris, France

**REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME ON THE
OUTCOMES OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY**

Submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds

12th Meeting of the Standing Committee, Paris (France)

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Report of the United Nations Environment Programme on the outcomes of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

1. The present report is submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for information of the 12th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Euroasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) on the resolutions relevant to the Agreement adopted by the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, held on 23 - 27 May 2016.
2. The Environment Assembly adopted the following resolutions, which when implemented will have an important impact on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 and the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018:¹
 - Resolution 2/5, on delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
 - Resolution 2/6, on supporting the Paris Agreement;
 - Resolution 2/7, on sound management of chemicals and waste;
 - Resolution 2/8, on sustainable consumption and production;
 - Resolution 2/10, on oceans and seas;
 - Resolution 2/11, on marine plastic litter and microplastics;
 - Resolution 2/12, on sustainable coral reefs management;
 - Resolution 2/13, on sustainable management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication;
 - Resolution 2/14, on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products;
 - Resolution 2/15, on protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict;
 - Resolution 2/16, on mainstreaming of biodiversity for well-being;
 - Resolution 2/17, on enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions;
 - Resolution 2/18, on the relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats;
 - Resolution 2/19, on the midterm review of the fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme IV);
 - Resolution 2/20, on the proposed medium-term strategy for 2018–2021 and programme of work and budget for 2018–2019.
3. UNEP is well positioned to make a positive contribution to work on the integrated perspective and enhancement of the implementation of the international legal instruments in the cluster of biodiversity through its medium-term strategies and programmes of work. The Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 and the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018 are reflected in the UNEP medium-term strategy for 2018–2021 and relevant subprogrammes of the programme of work for 2018–2019 (in particular the subprogrammes “Healthy

¹ Resolutions adopted by Environment Assembly at its second session are available from <http://web.unep.org/unea/list-resolutions-adopted-unea-2>.

and productive ecosystems”, “Environmental governance” and “Environment under review”) adopted by the Environment Assembly in its resolution 2/20.²

4. In its resolution 2/5, on delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Environment Assembly outlined the contribution of UNEP to delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The resolution encouraged the Executive Director, within the mandate, programme of work and budget of UNEP, to take action to enhance coordinated, coherent and integrated delivery within the United Nations system on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by, inter alia, fostering partnerships and other means of cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies; engaging with regional coordination mechanisms, as appropriate; actively promoting the integration of the environmental dimension into United Nations development assistance frameworks at the country level; and enhancing institutional and human capacity-building at the national, regional and international levels.

5. The Environment Assembly also encouraged the Executive Director to further promote synergies between multilateral environmental agreements at the national, regional and global levels, recognizing the institutional independence of the governing bodies of those agreements, with a view to increasing efficiency, effectiveness and inclusiveness and avoiding duplication of efforts; invited multilateral environmental agreements to take into account relevant targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in their reporting obligations; and emphasized that UNEP, within its mandate, had an important role in the follow-up to and review of progress in implementing the environmental dimension of sustainable development, including the provision of policy-relevant information, through assessment processes such as the Global Environment Outlook, as a contribution to the *Global Sustainable Development Report* and to the annual Sustainable Development Goals progress report, all of which should support the overall follow-up and review by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

6. At the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, UNEP launched a publication “*Role of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*”.³ The publication provides an overview of the linkages between the current strategic plans, targets and indicators of various biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and the Sustainable Development Goals, along with recommendations for national and global action, and is projected to be a major tool as the multilateral environmental agreements position themselves to play a significant role under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7. Environmental crime, including wildlife and forest crime, is now considered to be the fourth largest crime sector, with dire environmental, economic and social impacts. In its resolution 2/14, on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, the Environment Assembly stressed its commitment to implementing fully and without delay the commitments set out in its resolution 1/3 and in General Assembly resolution 69/314, on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife through effective international cooperation among relevant multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations.

8. In response to Environment Assembly resolution 1/3, General Assembly resolution 69/314, resolution 11.16 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species and resolution 6.12 of the meeting of the Parties to the AWEA, the Executive Director of UNEP has prepared an analysis of the environmental impacts of illegal trade in wildlife”,⁴ which was made available to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session. Strongly evidence-based, the analysis synthesizes for the first time the environmental effects of illegal trade in wildlife, enhancing the knowledge base for further development of policy-support tools.

9. UNEP is increasingly engaged in activities aimed at combating environmental crimes, especially those involving illegal exploitation of natural resources. In particular, UNEP has sought to address the issue through strengthening the evidence base for intervention; establishing national policies and capacity-building programmes; and raising awareness on the issue to decrease demand. UNEP work in the area includes strengthening the environmental rule of law at all levels, as mandated by the UNEP Governing Council in its decision 27/9, on advancing justice, governance and law for environmental sustainability, and by the Environment Assembly in subsequent resolutions in order to strengthen the environmental rule of law, support national legislation processes, public participation, enforcement and judicial actions.

10. In support of target 15 of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 and target 2.3. of the AWEA Strategic Plan 2009-2018, UNEP continued to strengthen international efforts to combat illegal trade in wildlife with the launch of the Wild for Life campaign at the second session of the Environment Assembly. The

² http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/cpr_portal/Portals/50152/UNEA%202/20.pdf.

³ United Nations publications, ISBN 978-92-807-3558-1. Available at <http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/Portals/8/publications/role-mea-synergies-sdgs.pdf>.

⁴ http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/Portals/50153/UNEA/FINAL_%20UNEA2_Inf%20doc%2028.pdf.



initiative is aimed at promoting collaboration, policy implementation and grassroots participation to sensitize communities in source and destination countries to the war on poaching.

11. In its resolution 1/6, on marine plastic debris and microplastics, the Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director to present a study on marine plastic debris and microplastics. The report, *Marine plastic debris and microplastics: Global lessons and research to inspire action and guide policy change*,⁵ which was made available for the second session of the Environment Assembly, provided a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge; an evidence base for urgent action, outlining potential ways for taking action; key conclusions; and a set of recommendations, including with regard to future research. UNEP also developed the first massive open online course on marine litter within the framework of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, for which UNEP serves as secretariat.

12. In its decision SS.XII/3, the Governing Council of UNEP recognized the importance of enhancing synergies, including at the national and regional levels, among the biodiversity-related conventions and invited the Executive Director of UNEP to undertake, as appropriate, further activities to improve the effectiveness of and cooperation among multilateral environmental agreements, to explore the opportunities for further synergies in the administrative functions of the multilateral environmental agreement administered by UNEP and to provide advice on such opportunities to the governing bodies of those agreements.

13. Further, in paragraph 89 of “The future we want”, Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives encouraged parties to multilateral environmental agreements to consider further measures to promote policy coherence at all relevant levels, improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication and enhance coordination and cooperation among the multilateral environmental agreements, including the three Rio conventions, as well as with the United Nations system in the field.

14. UNEP in cooperation with biodiversity-related multilateral agreements, Parties and experts has reviewed guidance, experience and lessons learned at the global, regional and national levels relating to the coherent implementation of biodiversity-related conventions through strengthened cooperation and synergies.

15. As a result UNEP published an options paper entitled “Elaboration of options for enhancing synergies among biodiversity-related conventions”,⁶ which was part of the report of the Executive Director of UNEP to the Environment Assembly at its second session. The options paper is one of several outputs delivered in the framework of the UNEP project on improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies.

16. The options paper sets out 28 recommendations and 88 action points for consideration by, among other bodies, the United Nations Environment Assembly, the governing and advisory bodies of each biodiversity-related convention, including the Convention on Migratory Species and its family of legal instruments, and the liaison group of the biodiversity-related conventions.

17. The options paper further identifies specific options for action to improve synergies and coherence in the implementation of the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, under seven related themes: national biodiversity strategies and action plans, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; reporting, monitoring and indicators; the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and strengthening the science-policy interface; information management and awareness-raising; capacity-building; funding and resource efficiency; and institutional collaboration. The options paper also identifies the need for implementation links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

18. Based on the report of the Executive Director of UNEP on the results of the project and other developments under biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session adopted resolution 2/17, on enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions,⁷ which creates further opportunities for collaboration and cooperation in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to biodiversity.

⁵ United Nations publication, ISBN No. 978-92-807-3580-6. Available at http://www.unep.org/gpa/documents/publications/Marine_Plastic_Debris_and_Microplastic.pdf.

⁶ <http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/Portals/50153/K1600544%20Doc%2012%20Add1%20Eng.pdf>.

⁷ http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/cpr_portal/Portals/50152/UNEA2%20RES/2-17.pdf.

19. The final report of the Executive Director of UNEP on the work of the task team on the effectiveness of administrative arrangements and programmatic cooperation between UNEP and UNEP-administered convention secretariats was submitted to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session.⁸ The recommendations in that report formed the basis for Environment Assembly resolution 2/18, on the relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats.⁹

20. The resolution calls for the Executive Director, inter alia, to develop a flexible draft template of options for the provision of secretariat services in an appropriate form; to maintain the flexibility required on a case-by-case basis in establishing the delegations of authority to the heads of the multilateral environmental agreement secretariats; to waive Programme Support Costs on voluntary contributions for participation costs when arranging participation is done by administrative staff financed by the Programme Support Costs on the operating budget; to prepare information for the governing bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements on the implications of the International Public Sector Accounting standards on their operational budgets; promote programmatic cooperation. UNEP is finalizing to respond to these requests by the first quarter as latest. It wishes to draw the attention of the Standing Committee to the following operative paragraphs, which are relevant to the governing bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements for which UNEP provides the secretariat or carries out secretariat functions:

3. *Invites* the governing bodies of the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements to bring to the attention of the Executive Director any administrative or financial challenges they face as a result of the practical implementation of their memorandums of understanding;

4. *Also invites* the governing bodies of UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements to share among themselves good practices in respect of their budget and human resource management;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director, when invited to do so by the governing bodies of the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements, to foster mutually supportive programmes of work between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and make available relevant scientific information important to their work.

⁸ <http://web.unep.org/unea/documents>.

⁹ http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/cpr_portal/Portals/50152/UNEA2%20RES/18.pdf.