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REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AEWA AFRICAN INITIATIVE NOVEMBER 2015 – DECEMBER 2016

Introduction

The AEWA African Initiative, adopted by Resolution 4.9 of the 4th Meeting of the Parties (MOP4) to AEWA, has been offering a practical mechanism for advancing the implementation of the Agreement in the African region since its launch in 2009. The AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA), developed in the framework of the African Initiative, provides an operational guideline for the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, translating the objectives of the AEWA Strategic Plan into tangible results in the African region, over the period of 2012-2018.

The current report covers activities, conducted by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, as well as related outputs contributing to the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, including the AEWA PoAA, over the period of November 2015 to December 2016.

Section 1: Coordination of the AEWA African Initiative

In accordance with Resolution 5.9, the coordination of the AEWA African Initiative is based within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in Bonn. It currently constitutes a P2 Coordinator and G5 Programme Assistant, both funded partly (50%) under the AEWA Core budget 2016-2018 and partly by voluntary financial contributions. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat received voluntary contributions from the Government of Switzerland (Federal Office for the Environment – FOEN) to supplement the 50% Core Budget funding for these positions up to the period of July 2017 for the Coordinator and November 2017 for the Programme Assistant. Securing voluntary financial contributions to supplement these two positions continues to prove difficult given the current financial situation and the funding policies of many donors which tend not favor financial support for staffing costs.

Resolution 5.9 also requested the establishment of [Sub-Regional Focal Point Coordinators \(SRFPCs\)](#)¹ to strengthen the AEWA African Initiative Coordination Unit, who are to be supported by the Technical Support Unit (TSU)², offered by the Government of France. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat continues to work closely with the SRFPCs and the TSU to plan and coordinate support provided towards the implementation of AEWA in Africa. In January 2016, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat participated in a meeting of the TSU Steering Committee in Camargue, France, which decided on the prioritization and

¹ ToRs for the SRFPCs:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aeawa%20pre-mop6_informatoin%20doc_srfpc%20tor.pdf

² ToRs for the TSU:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aeawa%20pre-mop6_information%20doc_tsu_tor.pdf

coordination of activities to be supported by the TSU, including those jointly implemented with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat (see section 2 for details on jointly implemented activities).

There have been no changes in the SRFPCs during the current reporting period. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat continues to liaise with them for planning and decision making on activities relevant for their sub-regions.

Section 2: Activities contributing to the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative

Development of the AEWA PoAA 2019-2027:

Resolution 6.14 of the AEWA MOP6 extends the period of implementation of both the AEWA Strategic Plan and AEWA PoAA until 2018, taking into account that the AEWA MOP7 is scheduled to take place in 2018. The same resolution also requests the development of drafts for both plans for the period of 2019-2027, to be submitted to the AEWA MOP7 for consideration and adoption. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat prepared a concept note to guide the development of the AEWA PoAA 2019-2027, which was approved by the AEWA StC on 20 November 2016, thus allowing for the PoAA development process to be initiated. This process includes fundraising, the convening of a PoAA Working Group (which will provide input for the development of the initial draft plan), as well as the recruitment of consultant(s) responsible for drafting the plan and facilitating the workshop of the PoAA Working Group (the latter being planned for September 2017). The PoAA Working Group will constitute representatives from the AEWA StC, Technical Committee (TC) and African Contracting Parties, as well as observers from non-African Contracting Parties and partner organizations.

Waterbird database management workshop for Anglophone Contracting Parties in Africa

A technical workshop was organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in collaboration with the TSU and Wetlands International, to enhance capacity for the management of waterbird data in the framework of the International Waterbird Census (IWC). This workshop took place from 22-24 October 2016 in Dakar, Senegal, immediately after the 14th Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC 14). It was made possible thanks to financial support from the Government of Switzerland and logistical support from Wetlands International Africa. The workshop brought together some 20 participants, including national IWC data base managers from 13 African countries (Angola, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe), and representatives from AEWA partner organizations (Wetlands International and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative). During the training, participants gained knowledge and hands-on experience for managing waterbird data resulting from the IWC, and worked directly on improving their current national IWC data. The training also enabled the participants to share experience and build the basis for future networking. This workshop replicated a similar successful one conducted for Francophone AEWA Contracting Parties in Dakar in December 2014. It contributes to improving the quality and quantity of waterbird data available from Africa (Result 3.1.1 of the AEWA PoAA), which was highlighted by all five African sub-regions as a priority to be addressed at the sub-regional level. This will in turn contribute to improving the quality of data available for assessing the status of AEWA populations as reported under the Conservation Status Reports (CSRs) submitted to each AEWA MOP.

Supporting waterbird monitoring in Africa

Thanks to a voluntary financial contribution from the Government of Sweden (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency), the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat supported the monitoring of waterbirds under the IWC in selected countries along the West-Asian/East African Flyway, following recommendations from the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership. This activity, the implementation of which was outsourced to Wetlands International, included waterbird counts in Burundi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda in the framework of the January 2016 IWC counts. It will also cover IWC counts in Chad, Madagascar and Sudan in 2017. The funding also allowed for the basic training of volunteers involved in the IWC counts as well as the provision of some field materials. The activity also contributes to improving the quality and quantity of waterbird data available from the region (PoAA Result 3.1.1).

Promoting the celebration of the World Migratory Waterbird Day in Africa

The World Migratory Waterbird Day (WMBD) once again received some prominence in the African region for the 2016 campaign which had as its global theme “... *and when the skies fall silent? Stop the illegal killing, taking and trade!*”. Thanks to a voluntary financial contribution from the Government of Germany (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety - BMUB), 14 African countries were enabled to participate with national or transboundary events in the 2016 campaign. This included nine national events in Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe as well as two transboundary events in Mauritania (in collaboration with Senegal) and Togo (in collaboration with Benin and Ghana). Through these events, attention was drawn to the need for migratory waterbird conservation, and particularly the problems related to the illegal use of waterbirds. The countries involved in the transboundary events also undertook engagements for future joint transboundary efforts for waterbird conservation.

Expanding the membership of AEWA in Africa

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat continues to work towards closing the gaps in membership to the Agreement in the African region. It received funds from the Government of Switzerland (FOEN) for the translation of the AEWA text into Portuguese, an activity of significant benefit to the five Portuguese-speaking African Range States, only one of which is currently a Contracting Party to AEWA (Guinea-Bissau). This activity is thus a priority to promote the accession of the remaining four Portuguese-speaking Range States. The relevant process for the translation was launched in November 2016. The translated text should be available by early 2017 and will contribute to facilitating the accession process for Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe

Also thanks to a voluntary financial contribution from the Government of Switzerland, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat was able to co-organize a national multi-stakeholder workshop to promote the accession of Cameroon to AEWA, together with the Cameroon Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife. The workshop took place in Yaoundé from 7-8 December 2016, with the participation of Cameroon’s ‘AEWA Committee’ including representatives of several Government Ministries and non-governmental organizations, directly or indirectly involved in the process of Cameroon’s accession to AEWA and the eventual implementation of the Agreement in the country. The aim of the workshop was to accelerate the process of Cameroon’s accession to AEWA. It resulted in the development of a road map which indicates the next steps required to complete the national accession process, as well as a Final Communiqué of the workshop declaring the engagement of the key stakeholders in taking forward the accession process. The workshop participants also gained a much clearer understanding of the benefits and obligations of being a Contracting Party to AEWA, and the national legal instruments in place which apply to waterbird conservation.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat also continues to follow-up closely with other non-Party Range States in Africa to promote the process of their accession, currently advanced for Botswana and Zambia. These activities will contribute to achieving result 5.1.1 of the AEWA PoAA.

Implementation of the AEWA Small Grants Fund

The AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF) provides support on the ground for waterbird conservation activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and has focused on the African region since its launch in 2010. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is currently finalizing the assessment of projects submitted for the 2015 project cycle, which was delayed due to the organization of the AEWA MOP6 and African Pre-MOP6 meetings in 2015. For the 2015 project cycle, a total of 19 project proposals were submitted by the deadline of 27 March 2016, 11 of which were eligible for evaluation. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has conducted the pre-assessment of these project proposals. The outcomes will be submitted to the AEWA TC and subsequently the AEWA StC for consideration and approval for the allocation of funds to projects.

Furthermore, administrative and financial arrangements have been concluded for the 2014 approved AEWA SGF projects in Morocco, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire, and activities are underway for the implementation of these projects.

Regarding past SGF project cycles, the two projects approved for the 2013 cycle in Guinea and Gabon were finalized in 2016 and the necessary reporting, administrative and financial processes have been conducted for the closure of the projects.

Promoting partnership for the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat continues to engage with various partners involved in the conservation of migratory waterbirds in Africa, including BirdLife International, Wetlands International, the TSU, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, UNEP and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, amongst others. In the case of the BirdLife/MAVA funded project on the conservation of migratory birds along the coast of West Africa (CMB project), in March 2016, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat was assigned as Chair of the Project Steering Committee for the second phase of the project which runs from 2016 – 2018. The project provides a significant contribution to the implementation of AEWA in Africa, particularly in the three focus countries (Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal) and concentrates on building national capacity for waterbird and site conservation, implementation of species action plans, provision of small grants for waterbird conservation activities on the ground and support for the celebration of the WMBD.