



**15<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**  
*11 – 13 December 2019, Bristol, United Kingdom*

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**UNEP INFORMATION NOTE FOR STC15 ON THE SESSIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY**

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. In particular, the outcomes of the meetings of the governing bodies of UNEP and the CMS family provide an overarching framework for mutually beneficial cooperation.

The fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA4) took place on 11-15 March 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Assembly, building on the implementation of the outcomes of its preceding sessions adopted the Ministerial Declaration and resolutions summarized in the following section of this document. The implementation of the resolutions will have an important impact on the execution of AEWA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2027.

The UN Environment Assembly, through its resolutions calls to actions to overcome environmental challenges, including health-related challenges by fostering innovative solutions and sustainable consumption and production against pollution, provides an opportunity for all people to help design solutions for our planet's health. This entails ecosystems restoration, conservation and landscape management, sustainable food systems, innovation and knowledge sharing on chemicals/waste management and promoting data and monitoring systems. Biodiversity including migratory flyways can be impacted by pollution in all its forms including air, land and ocean pollution and elevates the significance of AEWA in being part of the decision-making process to mitigate pollution. Henceforth, programmatic cooperation on UNEA resolutions in the preparation for the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Water birds, might be strengthened to that end.

UNEA-4 Proceedings, Report, Ministerial Declaration, Resolutions and Decisions can be downloaded at: <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/proceedings-report-ministerial-declaration-resolutions-and-decisions>

**The Ministerial Declaration (UNEP/EA.4/HLS.1)** of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly reaffirmed the dedication of Ministers of Environment to address environmental challenges through advancing innovative solutions, and to moving towards sustainable and resilient societies through sustainable consumption and production patterns.

**UNEA4 resolutions**

UNEA4 adopted 23 resolutions and 3 decisions, calling for innovative action and strengthened partnerships on several environmental challenges related to Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Resource Efficiency, Chemicals and Waste and Environmental Governance. Resolutions that have linkages with AEWA's Strategic Plan and to the resolutions adopted by its Meeting of the Parties are listed below:

**UNEP/EA.4/RES.6: Marine plastic litter and microplastics** - Noting that marine plastic litter and microplastics is a main problem threatening migratory birds globally, the resolution encourages member states and other stakeholders to consider a whole-lifecycle approach and resource efficiency, promote environmentally sound management of waste, awareness creation on importance of and encouraging sustainable consumption and production. The ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics established by its resolution 3/7 is requested to identify technical and financial resources or mechanisms for supporting countries in addressing marine plastic litter and micro plastics. In addition, the group is requested to encourage partnerships and to analyze the effectiveness of existing and potential response options.

**UNEP/EA.4/RES.10: Innovations on biodiversity and land degradation** - This resolution takes note of the need of preventing the loss and degradation of biodiversity. It encourages member states and relevant stakeholders to undertake strategic environmental assessments, upscale their efforts to prevent loss of biodiversity and degradation and to mainstream biodiversity in all relevant sectors.

**UNEP/EA.4/RES.11: Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities** - The resolution notes the high vulnerability of coastal and marine environments to pollution resulting from land-based activities. It also notes the high contribution of coastal and marine environments to the economy as well as providing ecosystem services. The resolution provides for the mainstreaming of protection of coastal and marine ecosystems in policies, promoting capacity building, knowledge sharing and partnerships in the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems from land-based activities.

**UNEP/EA.4/RES.12: Sustainable Management for Global Health of Mangrove** - Mangroves provide a wide range of ecosystem services as well as provision of forage and nesting for millions of migratory bird species. This resolution encourages member states and other relevant stakeholders to use ecosystem-based approaches for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of mangroves, strengthen and formulate policies, improve research and public awareness for sustainable management and restoration of mangroves. It also encourages member states to promote traditional knowledge for conservation of mangrove ecosystems.

**UNEP/EA.4/RES.13: Sustainable coral reefs management** - Coral reef systems provide important habitats for seabird species, and in return, the nutrients provided by the birds are particularly important to coral reefs when they suffer from bleaching. This resolution encourages Member States in collaboration with UNEP, ICRI, and other partners to build on the success of the International Year of the Reefs 2018, assist with the compilation of best practices for coral restoration and continue their efforts in strengthening awareness about the ecological, economic, social, and cultural value of, and critical threats to, coral reefs and associated ecosystems.

**UNEP/EA.4/RES.15: Innovations in Sustainable Rangelands and Pastoralism** - The resolution recognizes the critical role that sustainable rangelands and pastoralism play in addressing environmental challenges, particularly for indigenous peoples, and local communities, where appropriate. It urges all stakeholders to raise awareness and promote innovative solutions for sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism, taking into account traditional knowledge; and to strengthen global efforts to conserve and sustainably use rangelands in particular in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

**UNEP/EA.4/RES.16: Conservation and Sustainable Management of Peatlands** - Peatlands provide a home to birds, insects and unusual plants that aren't found anywhere else. This resolution urges Member States and other stakeholders to give greater emphasis to the conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of peatlands worldwide in support of sustainable peatland management including through existing efforts implemented by institutions such as UNEP and FAO. UNEA requests the Executive Director of UNEP, within existing resources and in consultation with the Secretariat of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, to coordinate efforts to create a comprehensive and accurate global peatlands inventory. It also encourages Member States, international organizations, the private sector and all other actors involved in the conservation, management and restoration of peatlands to cooperate with existing national, regional and

international peatland management organizations and all actors, including the Global Peatlands Initiative led by UNEP, to foster the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands.

### **Administrative and financial management support**

The United Nations Secretariat has deployed the following modules of its enterprise resource management systems, Umoja, in various pilot offices; Grantor Management, Fund Raising, Strategic Management Application and finally Budget Planning and Consolidation. UNEP has implemented the Grantor Management module in all its Conventions, Divisions and Regional Offices thereby standardizing implementing partner engagement. The Agreement Secretariat has been trained on the new application and has successfully engaged implementing partners.

The Secretariat employs the Agile methodology of systems development and the final product will allow implementing partners to submit applications to execute defined programs that will be launched via the grantor management module.

On 18th December 2018, the United Nations Secretary-General, issued ST/SGB/2019/2 which established a new delegation of authority framework effective 1st January 2019. The objective of the new framework is to transfer centrally held authority closer to the point of service delivery. On 4 November 2019, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) approved its updated Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework in line with ST/SGB/2019/2. The current Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework for the Management and Administration of Multilateral Environmental Agreements Secretariats (November 2016) will be updated early next year after consultations with MEAs Secretariats.

The Executive Director decided to provide extra administrative coordination to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) through the establishment of a dedicated Unit within Corporate Services Division under the supervision of the Division Director. Support provided by the unit includes budget administration, audit coordination and risk management, backstopping of administrative staff, treasury function for Multi-Lateral Fund among others.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/217 and the United Nations procedures stipulated in administrative issuance ST/AI/286, programme support costs at a standard rate of 13 per cent are charged on all extrabudgetary resources to recover the incremental costs incurred when supporting activities financed through such resources. The amount of programme support resources available in any given year is dependent on the income generated for that purpose in the previous year. The Agreement's Secretariat administrative staff and activities are funded through programme support resources which in recent years have been insufficient to meet expected obligations. The Executive Director has requested heads of offices to reconsider any requests for program support cost waivers which substantially reduce program support resources.