



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة · 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT · PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN

MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA)

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AN UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2004-2005

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper prepared by the Division of Environmental Conventions in UNEP, gives information about substantive UNEP support to environmental conventions including AEWA and to administrative support to CMS and its co-located Agreements based in Bonn, including AEWA, provided by the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON).

A. UNEP SUPPORT TO BIODIVERSITY-RELATED MEAs (INCLUDING AEWA)

I. Tenth meeting of secretariats of multilateral environment agreements

1. The tenth meeting of multilateral environment agreement secretariats was held in 2004 in Nairobi. The meeting was attended by the executive secretaries of all UNEP-administered conventions, including CMS representing also related Agreements e.g AEWA, as well as those of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention). The discussions that took place during the meeting are summarized below:
 - Systematic contact should be established between UNEP and the secretariats of multilateral environment agreements. Annual or biannual meetings between UNEP and the secretariats should be organized to coincide with the preparation of the UNEP work programme. These meetings should preferably be held back-to-back with the meetings of the Environmental Management Group to promote synergies with the intergovernmental organizations represented there. The meetings should be complemented with bilateral meetings between UNEP and the secretariats of multilateral environment agreements;
 - Focus areas for UNEP should be established. UNEP should focus on areas where it has comparative advantages in terms of human and financial resources such as transboundary issues; capacity-building and institution-building at the national level; work on compliance and enforcement at the regional and national levels; trade and the environment; outreach and public awareness; and identification of joint programmes of work;
 - UNEP should provide political support to multilateral environment agreements by facilitating communication between parties interested in the environment and other related areas; improving public participation and access; preparing a research data base on gaps and emerging issues; examining potential conflicts between multilateral environmental agreements; and highlighting linkages between the agendas of international meetings, such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and multilateral environmental agreements;

- UNEP should provide practical support by establishing an interdivisional task force within UNEP to coordinate and enhance activities in support of multilateral environment agreements and by providing an assessment of progress on the implementation of decisions of previous multilateral environment agreement meetings that had called for UNEP action, as well as to identify successes and failures;
 - UNEP should strengthen regional delivery through capacity-building and training activities, national level coordination and implementation of the environmental components of sustainable development frameworks at the ministerial level. Further, UNEP could follow up decisions taken by the Parties to multilateral environmental agreements, provide assistance in the development of subregional and regional collaboration mechanisms through subregional and regional ministerial forums, and use regional workshops on multilateral environment agreements;
 - UNEP should help to improve coherence among multilateral environment agreements by ensuring that experiences gained with respect to one multilateral environment agreement are passed on to others. Convention secretariats should make case studies available to each other and to UNEP.
2. As a follow-up to the tenth meeting of the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, UNEP has established an interdivisional task force to coordinate the work of all UNEP divisions in support of multilateral environmental agreements. A database is being developed to monitor the implementation of decisions of conferences of the parties with respect to which UNEP has been asked to take action. Desk officers have been appointed in the Division of Environmental Conventions to assist convention secretariats in their interactions with UNEP divisions and on administrative matters with the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

II. Project on issue-based modular approach to the implementation of the decisions of the biodiversity related multilateral environmental agreements at the national level

3. A project on an issue-based modular approach to the coherent implementation of the decisions of biodiversity-related conventions at the national level has been launched with the support of all the major biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements including non-UNEP administered conventions such as the Ramsar Convention and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention). This project, which would initially involve countries in Africa, would assist countries in implementing the multilateral environment agreements to which they are party by providing them with structured information on cross-cutting topics. Specific products in the form of issue-based modules on cross-cutting topics would be developed to deliver this information. The project would aim at developing a system that could be applied to any cross-cutting topic for any combination of multilateral environment agreements. Following a consultative meeting with the major biodiversity conventions, four issues have been chosen for the development of priority modules: Climate change; inland waters; invasive alien species; and sustainable use. To be properly appreciated, this project should be viewed in the context of biodiversity being one of the priority topics of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

III. Harmonization of national reporting

3. Following the completion of four country-based pilot projects, a draft summary report entitled "Harmonization of information management and reporting for biodiversity-related treaties" was published by the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) in 2004 and is available on the centre's web site

(www.unep-wcmc.org). The draft report summarizes the outcome of the four pilot projects, makes recommendations for follow-up at the international level and sets out guidelines for national level harmonization of reporting and related work.

4. Eight conventions and international programmes, including CMS (and partly AEWA), CITES, CBD, the International Whaling Commission, the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention, the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (the Cartagena Convention), and the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme were covered by one or more of the pilot projects.
5. Following completion of the pilot projects, a workshop was convened by UNEP/WCMC in cooperation with the Governments of Belgium and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at Haasrode, Belgium, on 22 and 23 September 2004. The workshop was attended by representatives of the five global biodiversity-related conventions incl. AEWA, eight countries, the European Commission and a number of international organizations with experience in this area. The objectives of the workshop were:
 - To review the conclusions and recommendations from the four pilot projects;
 - To review the conclusions and recommendations of other recent harmonization and streamlining initiatives and the implications of other recent developments in reporting processes;
 - To use those inputs as a means for further identifying and clarifying mechanisms to support harmonization at the national level; and
 - To develop plans and set priorities for future work in this area.
6. Based on pilot project reports, presentations made at the workshop and subsequent discussions, the workshop developed 12 recommendations for action. Amongst other things, those recommendations called on conventions and agreements to clarify and redefine the information they need in order to assess implementation and outcomes. They should also address the balance between reporting on implementation and reporting on outcomes, particularly in the light of the 2010 target. When requesting reports, conventions and agreements should also explain clearly what the information will be used for and how it will be analysed. The recommendations also stated that the reporting should relate to decisions taken by the governing bodies, both providing information to support the decision-making process and reporting on actions taken to implement decisions and their effect. With this in mind, after each meeting of governing bodies, countries should disseminate the relevant parts of decisions and an analysis of their impacts to all ministries that are affected by those decisions. The liaison group of biodiversity-related conventions should consider establishing a technical task force to develop and promote a streamlined reporting agenda across conventions and agreements, taking into account the issues raised in the pilot projects and in the present report, developments requested by governing bodies, and issues discussed during the Environmental Management Group review. The task force would comprise technical officers from the secretariats supported as necessary by other appropriate experts. It is anticipated that the group and task force would work inter-sessionally to develop proposals which would be considered and adopted by governing bodies.
7. At the national level, focal points for each of the biodiversity-related conventions and agreements should establish a mechanism appropriate to national circumstances to ensure coordination of all activities to do with the implementation of international obligations at the national level, including reporting. Countries should develop their capacity for managing information more effectively to support implementation of obligations and for reporting. Such approaches should focus on enabling access to information, should build on the experience of the pilot projects and use both existing tools (e.g. the Global Biodiversity Information Facility or the Inter-American

Biodiversity Information Network) or tools and networks that are being developed. Access to information necessary for implementation of, and reporting to, all biodiversity-related agreements through a single portal or clearing house would significantly facilitate a more harmonized approach.

8. Conventions and agreements should also explore opportunities for taking concrete actions to reduce the reporting burden, for example, by not adding new requests for information without removing existing requests in parallel, by reducing the amount of information requested, by linking reporting more closely to strategic planning, by exploring new mechanisms for reporting, and so on. This could be done within the existing mandates of most secretariats. Capacity-building activities for information management and reporting among local, national, regional and multilateral applications should focus on all three levels of capacity development: individual, institutional and systemic. It is also recommended that steps should be taken to ensure that the Global Environment Facility and its implementing agencies take fully into account the coordination and information management required to support both implementation and reporting for the various multilateral environmental agreements when financing and implementing programmes.

IV. Expert workshop promoting CITES/CBD cooperation and synergy

9. UNEP, together with the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, financed a workshop on CITES/CBD cooperation and synergy, which was held in 2004. Workshop participants paid specific attention to the issues of sustainable use of wildlife resources, access and benefit sharing, and linking site-based, thematic and species-based approaches to achieving biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Changes desired within each of these areas were identified, methods and mechanisms to achieve those changes suggested, and possible constraints to achieving such changes noted. Other areas covered during the workshop included links to the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2010 target on biodiversity loss, the CBD global strategy for plant conservation, and invasive alien species. The workshop report was tabled for consideration at CITES COP-13 in Bangkok, as well as CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), in February 2005, also in Bangkok. The full report of the proceedings of the workshop can be accessed at http://www.traffic.org/news/cites_cbd.html.

V. Information support to Conventions by the Information Unit of on Conventions, UNEP/DEC

10. UNEP, in co-operation with IUCN, has developed ECOLEX – a Web-based information service on environmental law. Over 480 environmental treaties, including CITES, CBD, CMS and related agreements such as AEWA, Ramsar and the Lusaka Agreement, are now available on-line at <http://www.ecolex.org>. The future development of ECOLEX will be focussed on increasing access to national legislation, soft law and literature. IUCN's fauna database will also be available on-line. FAO is also included in the ECOLEX consortium.

VI. UNEP-WCMC Support to AEWA

11. UNEP-WCMC has provided a range of support for AEWA over the last six years including:
 - (a) **Former design¹ and development of the AEWA web site** <http://www.unep-awea.org/>

¹ Early 2005 the whole website has been revamped by the AEWA Secretariat and the former design has been replaced by a new design.

The site currently contains general information on the agreement, displayed in English and for some parts also English.. Furthermore, the site contains species information, including images and sound, and information on the conservation status. Additionally a pilot Internet Map Server has been developed to provide an interactive tool for users to retrieve information from multiple sources, including protected areas, species information and Important Bird Area data from BirdLife International.

(b) Design of AEWA species flyway posters

The first AEWA Flyway poster was designed in 1998 using the Red Knot <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/species/animals/birds/flyway/calcan.htm> to demonstrate the extent and value of the Agreement. Two more AEWA Flyway posters have been developed at UNEP-WCMC (Brent Goose and for the Lesser and Greater Flamingo).

(c) Reports and Participation in AEWA

UNEP-WCMC on behalf of the CMS Secretariat synthesizes reports to CMS. UNEP-WCMC participates in various meetings of AEWA including Technical Committee meetings, as well as advising the secretariat on various issues.

VII. UNEP-GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project

12. The UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project's origins lie in a 25 year history of collaboration between the International Crane Foundation (ICF) and a network of scientists concerned about the conservation of the Siberian Crane and the Wetlands the species depends upon. The CMS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning conservation measures for the Siberian Crane provides an international policy framework coordinating conservation measures for critically endangered species, which meets biennially to review and prepare two-year conservation plans for the three known populations. At the third Meeting of Parties to the MOU, that a large scale international project should be developed and submitted to GEF to support the implementation of the conservation plans.
13. This UNEP/GEF project was approved and started in March 2003. CMS is represented on the Steering committee for the project, and one regional project staff based in Moscow (Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator (SCFC)) is co-financed by CMS and GEF, and coordinates CMS MOU activities with assistance from ICF staff. General information on the project can be obtained from its public website: www.scwp.info and the Siberian Crane flyway coordination website: www.sibeflyway.org.

VIII. Compliance and Enforcement of MEAs

14. CMS Secretariat and related Agreements such as AEWA, participated in six regional workshops organized by UNEP/DEPI between 2003 to March 2005 on Compliance and Enforcement of MEAs where valuable input were received on the review of the Manual on the Guidelines on Compliance and Enforcement of MEAs. They have confirmed participation to two upcoming regional workshops for Arabic speaking and French speaking African countries in mid 2005. CMS and related Agreements, including, AEWA provided cases studies and experiences incorporated into the Manual.

B: UNON ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO THE CONVENTION

i) *AEWA administrative issues*

15. UNEP/UNON continues to work closely with the Common CMS Admin Unit by providing support and guidance on all administrative and financial issues as needed.

16. UNEP/UNON installed IMIS in Bonn in May this year after training CMS-family staff. A UNON staff member was loaned to CMS-family to assist with the preparations and continues to provide support until further notice.

ii) *Personnel Issues*

17. As of October 2003 the recruitment of the Executive Secretary of AEWA at the P4 level is on going. The staff member is scheduled on board by August 2005.

Recruitment of the Executive Secretary of CMS was completed and the staff member, Mr. Robert Hepworth is on board.

iii) **Accounting and Financial Management Services**

18. There continues to be good co-operation and consultation between the CMS Common Admin Unitstaff and their counterparts in UNON in this area. The Admin Unit/AEWA Secretariat and/or UNON prepare all financial reports in consultation.
19. Invoicing for 2005 and prior years' contributions was completed on 30-12-2004. A website was established for the AEWA Secretariat to have immediate access to the status of contributions.
20. The accounts for the year 2004 were closed by 15th March 2005; audit by the United Nations Board of External Auditors was done in April 2005.