



5th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
14 – 18 May 2012, La Rochelle, France

“Migratory waterbirds and people - sharing wetlands”

RESOLUTION 5.15

**IMPACT OF INVASIVE ALIEN AQUATIC WEEDS ON
WATERBIRD HABITATS IN AFRICA**

Aware that invasive alien plant species are increasingly altering natural habitats and that one of the effects of global climate change is expected to be the accelerated distributional spread of alien species into new areas,

Recalling that, for waterbird populations listed in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan, Paragraphs 2.5.1 and 2.5.3 of AEWA’s Action Plan provide that Contracting Parties shall, if they consider it necessary, prohibit the introduction of non-native species of animals and plants which may be detrimental to these populations, and that they shall take measures, to the extent feasible and appropriate, including to ensure that when non-native species or hybrids thereof have already been introduced into their territory, those species or their hybrids do not pose a potential hazard to the populations listed in Table 1,

Also recalling that, for waterbird populations listed in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan, Paragraph 4.3.11 of AEWA’s Action Plan requires Contracting Parties *inter alia* to establish appropriate measures to tackle threats to migratory waterbirds from aquaculture, including the environmental assessment of developments that threaten wetlands of importance for waterbirds, especially when dealing with, *inter alia*, non-native and potentially invasive species,

Further recalling Resolution VIII.18 on invasive species and wetlands of the Ramsar Convention, which highlights, among other things, that invasive species continue to pose a major threat to the ecological character of wetlands and wetland species worldwide,

Noting the negative impact of invasive alien aquatic weeds on waterbird habitats in Africa, and that the proliferation of invasive weeds is, in part, due to the growing human population, agricultural development and water regulation, such as dam developments causing the lack of normal flooding, travel, trade and the over-exploitation of wildlife and fisheries,

Aware that many African countries lack the resources and capacity to combat invasive alien aquatic weeds independently,

Acknowledging the findings outlined in the report *Rehabilitation of Important Migratory Waterbird Sites, Which Have Been Degraded by Invasive Aquatic Weeds* (document AEWA/MOP Inf. 5.4), which outlines the potential negative effects that invasive weeds can have on birds, *inter alia* through loss of nesting and feeding sites, displacement, loss of cover and increased exposure to predation as well as breeding failure.

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Calls upon* Contracting Parties and other Range States in Africa, to enhance efforts towards the recognition, prevention, eradication and control of invasive aquatic weeds in order to avoid adverse effects on migratory waterbirds, and in particular to:
 - 1.1 encourage relevant government authorities to strengthen or develop and implement regulations on integrated prevention, management and control of invasive alien aquatic weeds and to monitor the affected areas, such as the instalment of a monitoring system for weed eradication activities, including an evaluation *inter alia* of the implementation of alien weed control and the impact on waterbird habitats in areas used by waterbird populations listed in Table 1;
 - 1.2 prevent invasive aliens from spreading and establishing in new wetland and waterbird habitats by taking adequate measures and analysing the pathways of invasive aliens further as well as taking climate change into account;
 - 1.3 consider to restore wetlands acknowledging the effect of restoration on preventing secondary invasions;
 - 1.4 minimise the negative effects of human activities, such as agriculture and water regulation, on natural habitats, in order to limit the spread of invasive alien aquatic weeds, particularly in and around key sites used by waterbird populations listed in Table 1;
 - 1.5 provide adequate training for site managers, encourage community involvement and raise public awareness on the threats posed by alien aquatic weeds to habitats and species;
2. *Encourages* all Contracting Parties to support the African Range States in minimising the negative impact of invasive alien aquatic weeds on migratory waterbirds in Africa, among other things, by exchanging knowledge and best practice;
3. *Further encourages* Contracting Parties and other Range States to make use of available international guidance on the elimination of invasive alien species such as the IUCN Guidelines for the prevention of biodiversity loss due to biological invasion;
4. *Invites* relevant international organisations such as the Ramsar Convention, and IUCN, as well as the European Commission, to cooperate with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in efforts to strengthen the capacity of African countries in minimising the impact of invasive aquatic weeds on waterbird habitats, while taking note of the AEWA African Plan of Action and the importance of its implementation in this respect.