

STATEMENT

**BRADNEE CHAMBERS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE
CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS
(CMS)**

**FOR THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES
TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY
WATERBIRDS (AEWA)**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to have the opportunity to address the opening of the Seventh Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds. First of all, I would like to thank the government and people of the Republic of South Africa for their generous hospitality in hosting this meeting.

I would also like to thank the Executive Secretary of AEWA, my colleague Jacques Trouvilliez, for inviting me to send my regards to you, as unfortunately, I cannot join you in person at this important meeting. I really would have loved to do so.

This seventh Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA under the theme “Beyond 2020: Shaping Flyways Conservation for the Future” will set milestones for waterbird conservation and management along the African-Eurasian Flyway for the next decade. As the largest daughter agreement of CMS with 77 Contracting Parties and covering 254 species of birds dependent on wetlands and the amazing number of almost half a billion individuals of water- and seabirds, AEWA plays a key role as a member of the CMS Family in achieving flyway conservation goals and adds an important component to the conservation of global biodiversity.

The recent Conservation Status Report of AEWA (CSR7) expresses AEWA’s character of a highly efficient intergovernmental tool for establishing and implementing international conservation policies. The overall status of AEWA waterbird populations has improved during the period of the Strategic Plan 2009-2018. It has been shown that the species recovery plans under AEWA have positively influenced the trend of waterbird populations in the long-term. I congratulate all Parties, involved project partners and organizations, and the AEWA Secretariat on this great success.

However, there is no room for complacency. Waterbird populations along the flyway, and worldwide, are facing a larger and more heterogeneous variety of threats than ever before, including the already noticeable impacts of climate change, habitat loss and degradation, over-exploitation and various sources of pollution. The fact that the CSR7 Report identified good governance as being the most important determinant in the trend of waterbird populations clearly shows the crucial role of AEWA and other multi-lateral environmental agreements on the international policy level in enabling and ensuring effective conservation on the ground. Through this pathway of promoting good governance serving people and nature, AEWA and other MEAs of the CMS Family directly deliver for the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Last week, the UN Biodiversity Conference – the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity – set the path for the global Biodiversity Agenda beyond 2020. The new Strategic Plan of AEWA for the period 2019-2027 and its new Plan of Action for Africa to be adopted at MOP7 will provide the basis for the agreement to importantly contribute to the conservation of biodiversity through effective action on one of the major flyways.

I feel deep gratitude when seeing the strong dedication of all of you, delegates from governments, experts and stakeholders from various fields, to contribute to the success of AEWA, its initiatives and action plans. Your dedication and tireless efforts vitalize these initiatives and make them become efficient tools for achieving conservation and sustainable management of waterbirds along the flyway. It is this dedication which we need to contribute our part, as CMS Family, to the global agenda on biodiversity conservation and the role of migratory species for its promotion on the political agenda for the environment. Waterbirds play a crucial role in sustaining healthy wetland ecosystems, and consequently in sustaining the livelihoods of people along the flyway. Your commitment to the conservation of these birds, and of all migratory species, is the key driver for achieving successful flyways conservation for the future of people and wildlife.

I wish you all a successful and interesting Seventh Meeting of the Parties.

Thank you.

4 December 2018