

RESOLUTION 3.6

DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUPPORT OF WATERBIRD POPULATION ASSESSMENTS

Reaffirming that the Agreement considers "that migratory waterbirds constitute an important part of global biological diversity which, in keeping with the spirit of the Convention of Biological Diversity, 1992, and Agenda 21 should be conserved for the benefit of present and future generations",

Aware that responsive formulation of conservation policies for migratory waterbirds depends crucially on up-to-date information on the status and trends of their populations,

Aware also that information on the status and trends of populations of migratory waterbirds provides an essential international context for the national implementation of the Agreement's Action Plan by Contracting Parties,

Recalling that the Agreement requires a review of the status and trends of migratory waterbirds necessary for the implementation of its Action Plan, and that this should be updated at intervals of not more than three years,

Conscious that the International Waterbird Census by Wetlands International is one of the largest harmonised global schemes for the collection of biodiversity data, providing essential inputs for the publication of the triennial report series *Waterbird Population Estimates*, which summarises best available information on the status of the world's waterbird populations,

Recalling that the International Waterbird Census and the *Waterbird Population Estimates* are recognised as of high priority for the implementation of the Agreement through their inclusion in the AEWA's International Implementation Priorities for 2000-2004 and 2003-2007,

Noting the reaffirmation by Ramsar's eighth Conference of the Parties "of the importance of data collected by the International Waterbird Census for the assessment of wetlands against Criteria 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the *Strategic Framework and Guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11)", and *noting also* CoP8's request "that Wetlands International bring to each future Conference of the Parties updated editions of *Waterbird Population Estimates*",

Recalling that Resolution VI.4 of the Ramsar Convention stressed "the need for close technical co-ordination between the Ramsar Convention, and especially the Bonn Convention's African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, and other international treaties and organisations, to ensure commonality in the use of international waterbird population estimates and 1% thresholds", and that the Ramsar Convention's Resolution VIII.38 desired "to promote the application of a single global source of information on [waterbird population] 1% thresholds",

Further aware that the wide geographic scale of the International Waterbird Census, its long history in some parts of the world, and its annual basis, all provide a highly responsive means of assessing fulfilment of the World Summit on Sustainable Development's 2010 biodiversity target,

Noting the Joint Work Programme between the Ramsar Convention, CMS and AEWA, which highlights the desirability of developing joint activities, projects and guidelines on topics of common interest in the Ramsar Strategic Plan and the AEWA's International Implementation Priorities,

Recalling that the 25th Anniversary Conference on the EU Birds Directive (Bergen-op-Zoom, November 2004) recommended *inter alia* the following actions:

- "Monitoring: use, and if necessary develop, effective and harmonised monitoring and reporting frameworks (building on existing monitoring approaches and methods including those of civil society using memorandums of understanding where appropriate) in order to establish adequate data flows on the status and trends of species, sites, habitats and related management measures; this is especially to reveal and communicate key trends of the bird indicators from 2006...",

and to:

- "Promote and support coordinated actions to strengthen the flyway management and long-term monitoring of waterbirds and other long-distance migratory bird species outside the EU notably in Africa, the Middle East and European non-EU states",

Recalling also the Edinburgh Declaration of the *Waterbirds around the World* global conference (Edinburgh, April 2004) which called:

- "in particular for urgent action to underpin future conservation decisions with high-quality scientific advice drawn from co-ordinated, and adequately funded, research and monitoring programmes notably the International Waterbird Census, and to this end, urge[d] governments and other partners to work together collaboratively and supportively;"

and to:

- "develop policy-relevant indicators of the status of the world's wetlands, especially in the context of the 2010 target, using waterbird and other data generated from robust and sustainable monitoring schemes",

and which called on:

- "the Conventions on Migratory Species, Biological Diversity and Wetlands, and other international agreements to work together and with other partners on such assessments, and in particular with Wetlands International to further develop the analytical content, of the triennial publication *Waterbird Population Estimates* and its use",

However, greatly concerned that the lack of a sustainable basis for funding the International Waterbird Census and *Waterbird Population Estimates* now jeopardises the provision of information for a wide range of international policy uses, *inter alia* the assessment of status and trends of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds and following reactive amendments to the AEWA's Action Plan; the application of Criteria 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the Ramsar Convention; the global review and assessment of conservation status of migratory waterbird species facilitating amendment to the appendices of the Convention on Migratory Species; and the potential use of data on waterbird status to inform WSSD's 2010 biodiversity target,

Convinced of the desirability of the development of a long-term programme of cost-sharing as a practical means of developing a sustainable programme of support for the international assessment of waterbird populations, not only for its own sake, but as indicators of trends in wider global biodiversity.

The Meeting of Parties:

1. *Urges* the urgent development of an international partnership to provide an essential and long-term funding regime for the International Waterbird Census and *Waterbird Population Estimates*, involving relevant users of outputs, *inter alia* international conventions and treaties, regional economic integration organisations, international agencies, national governments, and national and international non-governmental organisations as appropriate;
2. *Requests* the Agreement Secretariat to work with Wetlands International to develop costed proposals to this end and to co-ordinate with interested parties to establish such a partnership as a matter of priority, thus facilitating the timely delivery of the Report on the status and trends of waterbird populations for future MOPs;
3. *Requests* the support of the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Biological Diversity, regional economic integration organisations, national governments, the European Community, national and international non-governmental organisations, and donor organisations to establish such arrangements for the financial support of the International Waterbird Census and *Waterbird Population Estimates* and its derived outputs as a means of informing a wide range of national and international conservation policies and indicators.