



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS



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

“Migratory waterbirds and people - sharing wetlands”

RESOLUTION 5.4

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WINGS OVER WETLANDS (WOW) UNEP-GEF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN FLYWAYS PROJECT AND POST-WOW PROSPECTS**

Recalling Resolution 2.4, in which Contracting Parties expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) towards the development of a project proposal for “*Enhancing Conservation of the Critical Network of Wetlands Required by Migratory Waterbirds on the African-Eurasian Flyways*”,

Further recalling Resolutions 3.11 and 4.10 which urged Contracting Parties, the Agreement Secretariat and specialised international organisations to provide matching funds to the *Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project* (hereafter referred to as the *WOW Project*) as well as to give highest priority for funding to those International Implementation Task (IIT) activities and projects specifically linked to the *WOW Project*,

Noting with appreciation previous decisions related to flyway conservation of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), most notably CMS Resolution 9.2, which set up a Working Group on Flyways and CMS Resolution 10.10, which acknowledged the *WOW Project* as the largest initiative to date in the African-Eurasian region for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats, and in particular its associated Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool,

Noting the previous decisions of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands relating to flyway conservation, in particular Resolution X.22, which welcomed the *WOW Project*, including the demonstration projects, capacity-building activities and the CSN Tool,

Recalling the priorities for waterbird conservation highlighted in 2004 at the “Waterbirds around the World” international conference and its concluding statement, the *Edinburgh Declaration*, which strongly encourages countries to make use of available resources including the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in order to finance action required under the *Declaration*,

Taking note of The Hague Action Statement issued on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of AEWA in June 2010, in which participants acknowledged the innovative tools developed by the *WOW Project* to assist in the implementation of AEWA and in which participants urged the GEF to continue to support international flyway-scale projects in the future,

Noting with satisfaction that the *WOW Project* was one of the top twenty projects selected by UNEP in 2011 to showcase twenty years of its engagement in the GEF, and that the *WOW Project’s* Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool won the first prize of the ESRI/SCGIS International Conservation Mapping Competition in the category “Best Interactive Web Map” in June 2011,

Welcoming the commitment of the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, BirdLife International and Wetlands International to consolidate and progress a programmatic partnership based on the *WOW Project*, for flyway-scale conservation of migratory waterbirds and the wise use of wetlands as outlined in the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on the “*Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats (Wings Over Wetlands)*”, signed by all the partners during the AEWA 15th Anniversary Symposium in The Hague, the Netherlands, on 14 June 2010,

Congratulating the main *WOW Project* partners, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNEP, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the UNEP World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) as well as a range of other local partners in Africa and Eurasia for the successful implementation of the *WOW Project*,

Noting with appreciation the generous support to the *WOW Project* through the numerous donations made at the international, national and local levels, most notably by GEF and the Government of Germany, but also the European Union and the Governments of Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland and others who provided matching funding to the *WOW Project* through the Agreement Secretariat, the provision of a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) by Germany to support the implementation of the *WOW Project*, as well as the significant co-financing provided by the individual *WOW Partners* and the *WOW Demonstration Project* countries: Estonia, the Gambia, Hungary, Lithuania, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Turkey, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen,

Recognising that the “African Initiative” (Resolution 5.9), offers a convenient frame for the further follow-up of the *WOW Project*. This also applies to the current Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative as well as the Conservation of Migratory Birds Project of Wetlands International and BirdLife International.

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Notes with satisfaction* the results of the multi-partner *WOW Project*, most notably the development of the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool, the Flyway Training Kit (FTK) and the numerous national and site-level achievements through Demonstration Projects;
2. *Urges* Contracting Parties to make greater use of the *WOW Project's* outputs, in particular the CSN Tool and the Flyway Training Kit, to support migratory waterbird conservation, training and capacity building efforts across the African-Eurasian region, and to communicate any specific needs in relation to the use of these products to the Secretariat;
3. *Invites* relevant Regional and sub-Regional Institutions and Forums such as *inter alia* the African Union, Forum of the Regional Programme of Marine and Coastal Conservation in West Africa, and the Regional Network of Protected Marine Areas in West Africa, to consider making use of the CSN Tool as a means of integrating flyway-scale waterbird conservation with regional and sub-regional level planning and decision making;
4. *Strongly urges* GEF to continue to recognise the importance of flyway-scale initiatives such as the *WOW Project*, and to strive to fund and support further international flyway-scale initiatives both within and beyond the AEWA region;
5. *Urges* Contracting Parties, donors and private sector sponsors to provide financial support to maintain and improve the CSN Tool, make greater use of the FTK and enable the development and implementation of new flyway-scale projects and initiatives, which would build on the tools and outcomes of the *WOW Project*;
6. *Instructs* the Agreement Secretariat to participate actively in the “Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats (Wings Over Wetlands)”, working with its partners to continue to advance, promote the use and further improve the main tools developed in the context of the *WOW Project*, and *invites* the Partnership to elaborate a joint work plan to support the implementation of its own objectives harmonising them with the related resolutions of the MOP;
7. *Underlines* the mutual benefits of integrating the follow up activities of the *WOW Project* with the framework of the African Initiative to deal with the relevant issues within a joint process;
8. *Instructs* the Agreement Secretariat to report progress on this activity to each Meeting of the Parties.