



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

STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP TO THE 2ND MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA)

Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany

2-3 November 2004

(Delivered by UNEP's representative, Mr. Nehemiah Rotich, Division of Environmental Conventions)

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Dr. Klaus Töpfer, sends his best wishes to this meeting.
2. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate AEWA as it comes to be a decade old. In the last nine years, effort has gone into the setting up of the organization and much has been done by the Agreement to have countries prioritize the protection of avian species and their habitats. AEWA has provided a legal framework to develop national legislation for protection of certain species of migratory birds and has called for programmes to be developed to protect threatened and vulnerable species along their respective flyways.

Chairman,

3. As they migrate every year across continents, for example from central Europe and western Asia to Africa, birds face formidable obstacles, such as deserts, thunderstorms and high mountains along their route. In their wintering areas, the birds are faced with variable conditions of food supply due to drought and changes in land use, especially farming practices and may also be exposed to pesticide poisoning. In some parts of the world they are also unappreciated, and conservation measures have not been put in place. They also occasionally collide with windmills, electric power lines and pylons. In order to ensure safe passage and survival of migrants in the wintering areas, there is need to monitor the populations.
4. The study of migratory birds has become an important mechanism of understanding the impacts of human activities on biological diversity, especially from habitat loss, degradation and environmental pollution. Several studies have been undertaken over the years; however, there is still need to address gaps in scientific knowledge of migratory birds and to promote sustained awareness campaigns and community participation in the conservation and monitoring of these birds through innovative concepts e.g twinning of breeding and wintering sites. Partnerships between countries also needs to be reinforced through synergies between MEAs. In this regard it is important for CMS and its Agreements, in particular AEWA to forge synergies with the relevant programmes of work of RAMSAR and the CBD.

Mr Chairman,

5. The tenth Co-ordination meeting of multilateral environment agreement secretariats was held on 8 and 9 March 2004 in Nairobi. This meeting was attended by the executive secretaries and representatives of all the UNEP-administered conventions, including CMS and its Agreements, the CBD, CITES, as well as those of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Ramsar.

6. The substance of the discussions in this meeting were summarized as follows:
 - (a) Systematic contact should be established between UNEP and secretariats of the multilateral environment agreements. Annual or biannual meetings between UNEP and the secretariats could be organized to coincide with the preparation of UNEP's work programme. These would preferably be held back-to-back with the meetings of the Environment Management Group to promote synergies with the intergovernmental organizations represented there. Those meetings could be complemented with bilateral meetings between UNEP and the secretariats of multilateral environment agreements;

 - (b) 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.

- (c) UNEP could provide political support to the multilateral environment agreements by facilitating communication between 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 presenting linkages between the agendas of international meetings, such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and multilateral environmental agreements;
- (d) UNEP could provide practical support by establishing an interdivisional task force within UNEP to coordinate and enhance activities in support of the 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;
- (e) UNEP could strengthen regional delivery through capacity-building and training activities, national level coordination and implementation of the environmental components of sustainable development frameworks at ministerial level. Further, UNEP could follow-up decisions taken by the Parties, 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.

- (f) UNEP could improve coherence among multilateral environment agreements by ensuring that experiences gained in one multilateral environment agreement could be passed on to others. Convention secretariats should make case studies available to each other and to UNEP.
7. As a follow-up to this meeting, UNEP has established an interdivisional task force to coordinate the work of all UNEP divisions in support of the MEAs. A database is being developed to monitor the implementation of decisions of the Conference of the Parties where UNEP has been asked to take action. Desk Officers have been appointed in the Division of Environmental Conventions to assist the MEA Secretariats in their interactions with UNEP Divisions and on administrative matters with the United Nations Office in Nairobi. A meeting of the ad hoc working group on administrative matters was held in May 2004 to discuss the pending administrative issues with the UNEP administered MEA secretariats.
8. A project on issue based modular approach to assist in the coherent implementation of the decisions of the biodiversity-related conventions at the national level has been launched with the support of all the major biodiversity related MEAs including non-UNEP administered conventions such as the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Centre. 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 of 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. The importance of this project should be seen 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.

Mr. Chairman,

9. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Governments agreed to achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity by the year 2010. The Summit duly characterized biodiversity as being “essential to our planet, human well-being and to the livelihood and cultural integrity of people” and further observed that the Convention on Biological Diversity, is “the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from use of genetic resources. It endorsed the 2010 target set by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD during its sixth meeting and put the Convention squarely at the centre of international action for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Accordingly, it would be understandable if we were to dwell a little more on the CBD processes.
10. At their seventh meeting, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Parties to

the CBD were faced with three main challenges: to find ways to achieve tangible progress to meet the 2010 target; to live up to the additional expectations placed on the Convention process at the World Summit; and to further reinforce the shift from policy development to implementation started at its fifth meeting, held in Nairobi in 2000.

11. In response to these challenges, the Conference of the Parties succeeded in agreeing on a provisional framework for goals and targets and a provisional list of indicators for assessing progress toward the achievement of the 2010 target. (Decision VII/30). In doing so, it also established an Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention to consider progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan and achievements leading up to the 2010 target, to review the impacts and effectiveness of existing processes under the Convention, and to consider ways and means of identifying and overcoming obstacles to effective implementation.

12. In assessing progress, the national reports submitted under the Convention will have a key role to play. Accordingly, the Conference of the Parties, in decision VII/25 A, requested Parties to submit as much information and data as available to improve the adequacy of information for the evaluation of the implementation of the Convention, the Strategic Plan of the Convention and progress toward the 2010 target. That information is to be provided through the third national reports, guidelines for which were also approved at the meeting (decision VII/25 B). Attention of AEWPA Parties is drawn to these Guidelines.

13. As reported at the 1st Meeting of the Standing Committee of AEWA, UNEP's collective work in following the 2010 biodiversity target is led by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. It should also be pointed out here that the CBD COP7 invited UNEP-WCMC to support the CBD Secretariat in responding to the 2010 target by providing support in reporting processes, including development of reporting formats, synthesis of reports, data management and development of major reports. UNEP encourages AEWA to keep in close touch with the Centre on this score as well as other relevant issues.

14. UNEP will also carry out the necessary follow-up activities in response to the requests in the recommendations adopted by the above-cited CBD Conference in Kuala Lumpur, in February 2004. The follow up includes activities to:
 - (a) Promote and encourage synergies and harmonization of activities, targets, assessments, and reporting processes for the 2010 target at both national and international levels for Biodiversity related cluster of MEAs.
 - (b) Enhance collaboration and partnership with international initiatives relating to environmental assessment e.g. Global Environmental Assessment, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, Global International Waters Assessment and;
 - (c) Enhance the role of MEAs in responding to the 2010 target.

15. We are pleased that AEWA is playing an expanding role in addressing the loss of biodiversity.

16. UNEP looks forward to a successful outcome of this committee's deliberations and to further progress in the implementation of its workprogrammes, in synergy with other biodiversity-related global and regional multilateral environmental agreements.

17. I wish this meeting the best in its deliberations of the important global and regional issues concerning the effective conservation of the African-Eurasian migratory Waterbirds.

THANK YOU
