



**13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**  
*03 - 05 July 2018, The Hague, the Netherlands*

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**INFORMATION NOTE**  
**FOR THE 13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE AEWA STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**  
**ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY (UNEA)**

*Prepared by the Law Division, UN Environment*

**Information Note for the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds on the outcomes of the Third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (3-5 July 2018, The Hague)**

This Information Note is in support to the long-standing and well-established synergetic cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA).

UNEP has continued to strengthen its programmatic support to the work of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and its agreements. In particular, the outcomes of the meetings of the governing bodies of UNEP and CMS family legal instruments provide an overarching framework for mutually beneficial cooperation.

The Third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UN Environment Assembly) took place on 4 - 6 December 2017 in Nairobi. The Assembly, building on the implementation of the outcomes of its first and second sessions adopted the Ministerial Declaration and resolutions summarized in the following section. These resolutions when implemented, will also have an important impact on the implementation of AEWA Strategic Plan 2009 – 2017 and may inform the new Strategic Plan to be prepared for consideration by the Parties at its 7<sup>th</sup> session.

In line with the theme of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly, UNEP in cooperation with partners including multilateral environmental agreements has prepared a report "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet- Background Report". The Report provides detailed evidence of a polluted planet, while also recommends potential actions to address the problem. The report can be downloaded at:

[http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21800/UNEA\\_towardspollution\\_long%20version\\_Web.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21800/UNEA_towardspollution_long%20version_Web.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

**The Ministerial Declaration (UNEP/EA.3/HLS.1)** of the Third session of the UN Environment Assembly reaffirmed the Ministers of Environment's "political commitment to create an enabling environment to tackle pollution in the context of sustainable development and in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity, including through adequate and predictable means of implementation as agreed in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda".

The UN Environment Assembly through its resolutions calls to actions against pollution, provides an opportunity for all people to help design solutions for our planet's health. "Pollution is a growing global concern, threatening the well-being of people and wildlife alike". This entails that ecosystems and biodiversity including migratory flyways can be impacted by pollution in all its forms, air, land and ocean pollution and elevates the significance of AEWA in being part of the decision-making process to mitigate pollution. Henceforth, programmatic cooperation on UNEA resolutions in the preparation for the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Water birds, might be strengthened to that end.

**UNEA resolutions**

The UN Environment Assembly adopted 11 resolutions, calling for accelerated action and strengthened partnerships on a number of issues namely: 1. combating the spread of marine plastic litter and microplastics; 2. eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of used lead-acid batteries; 3. environment and health; 4. improving air quality globally; pollution control by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors; 5. addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems; 6. managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development; 6. and pollution prevention and control in areas affected by terrorist operations and armed conflicts.

<https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/unea3>.

These resolutions have implications on migratory water birds and provide an opportunity for broad programmatic collaboration. The following is a summary of the resolutions that highlight direct or indirect correlation with AEWA:

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.1:** pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism; the resolution targets environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem services caused by pollution that is inflicted by armed conflicts such as oil spills, in countries suffering from this problem. Armed conflicts hamper sustainable development, and the resolution has linkages with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which promotes peace, justice and security for all.

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.2:** pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors; this resolution addresses soil, air and water pollution impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems and the co-benefits of integrating productive and polluting sectors such as agriculture, aquaculture, extractives, energy, and tourism into evidence-based policy planning and decision making.

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.4:** environment and health, stresses the health benefits of addressing global environmental challenges such as air, marine, water and soil pollution, chemicals exposure, waste management, climate change, and biodiversity loss, and their interrelations, and the importance of cross-cutting and preventive approaches, including gender mainstreaming, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ecosystem-based approaches, into health and well-being, at all stages.

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.5:** investing in innovative environmental solutions for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; urging member states supported by international organizations to adopt, as appropriate, innovative environmental solutions, financial mechanisms and partnerships for sustainable industrialization, agriculture, sound urban development, transport, tourism and trade and sustainable production and consumption in those sectors. Thus, preventing, reducing and reversing ecosystems degradation and loss and developing policies and partnerships with the private sector to that end.

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.6:** managing soil pollution to achieve Sustainable Development; acknowledging that land is the main resource base around which ecosystem services are anchored and that soil is one of the largest reservoirs of biodiversity, and the negative impacts of the contamination of soil undermine productivity and sustainability of ecosystems, biodiversity, agriculture and food security and clean ground and surface water potentially affecting water birds and hampering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including, SDGs

1,2, 3, 6,12, 13 and 15. Marine birds are useful as bioindicators of environmental pollution in estuarine and marine environments because they are often at the top of the food chain where they bioaccumulate contaminants with age. Lead poisoning is one of the most insidious threats to birds of prey, waterfowl and game birds, and it takes very little contamination to lead to illness, debilitation or death.

The resolution urged the international community to strengthen and coordinate national and regional policies and legislation to curb soil pollution; to support development of information systems of polluted sites and programmes that invest in the sustainable land management and research aimed at preventing, reducing and managing soil pollution; to facilitate sustainable resource mobilization from all sources. The resolution also requests the UNEP, in collaboration with other UN agencies and relevant global and regional initiatives with expertise related to soil and soil pollution, including the FAO, the Global Soil Partnership, the UNCCD, the WHO, the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions and the International Committee on Contaminated Land to cooperate as appropriate on efforts geared at preventing, reducing and managing soil pollution.

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.7:** Marine litter and microplastics. Noting with concern the high and rapidly increasing levels of marine plastic litter and the expected increase in negative effects of land based activities on marine biodiversity, ecosystems, animal well-being, migratory water birds particularly, fisheries, maritime transport, recreation and tourism, local societies and economies, and the urgent need to “step up actions by 2025”, strengthened knowledge on the levels and effects of micro- and nanoplastics on marine ecosystems, seafood and human health; encourages all member states among others to develop national action plans to prevent marine litter integrating waste management, recycling legislations and prioritizing clean-up in the marine environment in areas where marine litter poses a threat to biodiversity.

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.8:** preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally. Humans are not the only ones suffering of poor air quality and chemically laced food and water. The animals of our planet are in crisis, as well, especially the birds. Air pollution impacts on avian species include respiratory distress and illness, increased detoxification effort, elevated stress levels, immunosuppression, behavioral changes, and impaired reproductive success. Addressing air pollution results in multiple benefits – to human health, the economy, ecosystems and to climate, and efforts across sectors are needed to improve air quality.

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.9** Eliminating Exposure to Lead Paint and Promoting Environmentally Sound Management of Waste Lead-Acid Batteries; wild fowls can die from the ingestion of one lead shot, bullet fragment, or sinker. According to a recent study on loon mortality, nearly half of adult loons found sick or dead during the breeding season in New England were diagnosed with confirmed or suspected lead poisoning from ingestion of lead fishing weights. The resolution opens the opportunity for AEWAs to participate in the global post-2020 chemicals agenda under negotiation (Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management - SAICM) and synergies with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

**UNEP/EA.3/Res.10:** addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems; water pollution is a global exacerbating problem and touches everyone and everything. This resolution builds on previous UNEA resolutions and has direct relevance to

AEWA. Water birds health and sustainability rely on water quality. Their lifecycles, migratory paths, breeding and feeding habits are changing with water quality and waste water abundance. They are negatively impacted by water pollution from chemical and biological sources. The resolution includes guidance to engage with water partners seeking solutions to mitigate water pollution at all levels such as UNEP and the Global Environment Monitoring System/Water Programme (GEMS-Water), custodian to monitoring SDG indicators 6.3.2 (ambient water quality) and 6.6.1 (freshwater ecosystems extent), as well as the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based activities, and finally with UN Water Convention.

To conclude, pollution exacerbated by climate change is a growing environmental concern by all the communities across the planet. Working together in the fight against pollution and building collaborative and integrated programmes has co-benefits for migratory water birds. The UNEA resolutions formulate a framework of action against pollution. Parties of the AEWA agreement can benefit of strategies that consider mitigating pollution in an integrated manner and whilst reviewing AEWA's new Strategic Plan.

#### **Administrative and financial management support**

The United Nations Environment Programme continues to work towards improving the effectiveness of administrative arrangements with the multilateral environmental agreements. To implement resolution 2/18 on "Relationships between the United Nations Environment Programme and Multilateral Environmental Agreements for which it provides the secretariat", adopted by the second session of the UN Environment Assembly in May 2016, UNEP has prepared standardized guidelines and procedures for financial matters to assist in budget preparation, financial monitoring and preparation of reports, thereby enhancing and streamlining internal processes and policies, which was shared with the secretariat of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and its agreements.

A note on the implications of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards on the operational budgets has been provided to the secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements. In close collaboration with the secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, United Nations Environment Programme has also developed clear and transparent procedures for the management of programme support account.

On 1 November 2016, United Nations Environment Programme adopted a Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework for the management and administration of Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements which simplifies, standardizes, streamlines, and makes more transparent the delegation of authority from the Executive Director to the heads of secretariats.

The United Nations Environment Programme has finalized the preparation of a flexible template of options for the provision of secretariat services to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other entities in an appropriate form in close collaboration with the secretariats of the multilateral environment agreements. A Template of Secretariat Services was communicated to

all the MEA secretariats on 29 March 2018. A copy of the template and the memo is enclosed with this Information Note.