



## 13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

03 - 05 July 2018, The Hague, the Netherlands

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### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AEWA FOR THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

This report provides an update of the activities undertaken in the Eastern Africa region of the AEWA since the 12<sup>th</sup> AEWA Standing Committee held in Paris, France, 31 January – 01 February 2017 as per guidelines for AEWA StC Regional Standing Representatives Reporting.

#### **1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous StC meeting**

The region has 12 contracting parties

- ❖ There are 6 eight contracting parties in Eastern Africa Region which include Republic of **Uganda, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan** and **United Republic of Tanzania**; and 6 contracting parties in Southern Africa region which include Republic of **South Africa, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Madagascar, Mauritius, Botswana**.
- ❖ There are 3 non- Party Range States in Eastern Africa – 3 (Somalia, South Sudan & Eritrea) and 8 non-Party Range States in Southern Africa – 8 (Angola, Comoros, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles and Zambia).
- ❖ One new accession since the 12<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee-Botswana on 1st November 2017.

#### **2. Number of Range States (Contracting Parties and Non-Contracting Parties) that provided feedback for the report**

- ❖ Two (Uganda and South Africa)

#### **3. Has the Regional Representative actively promoted accession to AEWA among the Range States in their region? If so, how has accession been promoted by the Regional Representative?**

- ❖ Botswana, a range state in the region acceded on 1st November 2017 and the Agreement came into force on 22nd August 2017.
- ❖ We have discussed with Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) within in the aegis of Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration, a transboundary collaboration framework for the conservation of the Greater Virunga landscape shared between Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Uganda.
- ❖ DRC has indicated readiness to join AEWA. We need to maintain the contact. Please note that DRC is not in Eastern AEWA Region but because of proximity and collaborative frameworks we have with DRC, we are in continuous talks.

#### 4. Which developments regarding the implementation of AEWA have taken place in the region since the last Meeting of the Parties?

##### 4.1 Republic of Uganda

- ❖ National Single Species Action Plan for Grey Crowned Crane for Uganda was approved by Government and is now ready for implementation. National Action Plan for the shoebill is in preparation. Uganda is partnering with International Crane Foundation to support crane conservation in the region through sites management and livelihood initiatives.
- ❖ On the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017, a new Management plan for L. Nabugabo Wetland System Ramsar site was launched at St. Hildegard Primary School, Nabugabo. The event was presided over by the Hon. Minister of Water and Environment. The launch of the management Plan and Information Handbook was the climax of the one-year Planning Process for Resilience in East Africa through policy, Adaptation, Research and Economic Development (PREPARED) project funded by USAID. Nabugabo wetland system is very critical for waterbird conservation in Uganda and the region.
- ❖ National RED list for Uganda 2018 was approved by Government. This list includes waterbird species. The Redlist will help Government to prioritize conservation efforts for the waterbirds included on the Redlist.
- ❖ Government of Uganda will be funding waterbird counts in Uganda through partnership with Nature Uganda. This funding will commence in the coming financial year 2018/2019 and will greatly improve waterbird conservation efforts in Uganda and the region.
- ❖ Uganda held the annual Big Birding Day event under theme "**Promoting Uganda as an Ultimate Birding Destination in the world**". The Uganda Big Birding Day 2017 was a three day event ( 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of November). It kicked off with a launch followed by the Birding exercises all over the country and climaxed with the Birding festival at the Uganda National Museum. The event is aimed at:
  - Using bird conservation to help promote domestic tourism in the country
  - To promote Uganda as a global birding destination
  - To create awareness about bird conservation through bridging the information gap by linking up all bird watchers, tourism promoters and conservationists with each other and the rest of the world in an exciting event.
- ❖ Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (UWEC) **successfully treated, fully rehabilitated and released back into the wild** a shoebill that had been rescued on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2018, following a choking on tilapia while feeding at Mabamba Bay wetland and consequent development of complications. The community group that manages the wetland alerted Government authorities of the incident and Government rescued the bird, treated it for three months and successfully released it back on 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. The bird has been observed to be doing very well back in the wild.

Mabamba bay is one of the few sites in the region and globally where a person has the highest chances of seeing a shoebill in the wild.

#### **4.2 Republic of South Africa**

- ❖ Middelpunt Wetland now forms part of the recently declared Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment, Mpumalanga Province.
- ❖ The declaration of the Ingula Nature Reserve (border of KwaZulu-Natal and Free State) is imminent.
- ❖ Through the use of a novel survey method, BLSA's research team discovered the first breeding of the threatened White-winged Flufftail in South Africa, contradicting prior thought that this flufftail is a non-breeding visitor to South African wetlands.
- ❖ BLSA's annual Flufftail Festival was held at Maponya Mall, Soweto in collaboration with several partners, including the Department of Environmental Affairs, to celebrate waterbirds, wetlands and water.
- ❖ Several activities to implement SSAP for Grey Crowned Crane have been undertaken including regular monitoring, habitat restoration, assessments to prevent powerlines from affecting cranes, participation in assessment of mining applications that could affect Grey Crowned Crane habitat on the Steenkampsberg, around Chrissiesmeer and in the Southern Drakensberg.

#### **5. Overview of special activities and/or meetings related to AEWA**

The Region participated in the planning and formulation of the draft AEWA Plan of Action for Africa and actively participated in the planning meeting held in Dakar, Senegal, in October 2017. The region had also actively participated in the development of draft AEWA Strategic Plan that provided a basis for the development of draft AEWA Plan of Action for Africa.

The region participated in the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee meeting that was held in Bonn, Germany, in April 2018.

#### **6. Overview of special issues that might be of interest to the StC**

- ❖ Burundi and Rwanda would be best coordinated if they were grouped in the Eastern Africa AEWA Region since these are members of the East African Community Regional Economic Block.
- ❖ Republic of South Sudan is also a member of East African Community now and would be best placed in the AEWA Eastern Africa Region.
- ❖ Several coal mining proposals in the Steenkampsberg Important Bird and Biodiversity Area are threatening the habitats of White-winged Flufftail and Grey Crowned Crane in the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Area and surrounding areas in Republic of South Africa.
- ❖ The region will be happy to host the 7th session of the AEWA Meeting of Parties in the Republic of South Africa, we look forward to seeing you all in the region.