



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.9

20 January 2020

Original: English, French and Spanish

13th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Gandhinagar, India, 17 - 22 February 2020
Agenda Item 9

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

(Prepared by the UNEP)

Summary:

This document contains the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the administrative and financial management support provided by UNEP to the Convention and on its programmatic cooperation with the Secretariat. The report provides updates since the previous report presented in October 2018.

The report is presented by the Secretariat unedited in all three languages as received from UNEP.

Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for consideration at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, to be held in Gandhinagar, India from 17 to 22 February 2020. It provides information on the administrative and financial management support provided by UNEP to the Convention and on its programmatic cooperation with the secretariat of the Convention since the forty-eighth meeting of the Convention's Standing Committee, held on 23 and 24 October 2018 in Bonn, Germany.

2. Building on the previous report provided to the Standing Committee at its forty-eighth meeting (UNEP/CMS/StC48/Doc.7), section II of the present report provides updates on programmatic collaboration between UNEP and the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species on the implementation of outcomes of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Manila from 23 to 28 October 2017. Section III of the present report provides information on administrative and financial management support provided to the Convention.

II. Programmatic support provided to the Convention on Migratory Species

A. Programmatic support and other areas of cooperation

3. UNEP continues to strengthen its programmatic support for the work and implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species and the family of instruments under the Convention. The outcomes of the meetings of the governing bodies of UNEP and of the family of Convention instruments provide an overarching framework for mutually beneficial cooperation. Regular consultations are taking place to foster programmatic cooperation and strategic and policy coherence.

4. The Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 is reflected in and integrated into the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2018–2021 and relevant subprogrammes of the programme of work for 2018–2019, in particular the subprogrammes on healthy and productive ecosystems, environmental governance, environment under review, and chemicals, waste and air quality, adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in its resolution 2/20.

5. The UNEP programme of work for 2018–2019 and its project portfolios related to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Migratory Species, are the subject of consultations at joint and bilateral meetings of the focal points in the secretariats of those agreements, who are responsible for programmatic cooperation with the UNEP subprogramme coordinators, cooperation that is facilitated and organized by the Law Division of UNEP. The joint consultation mechanism on programmes and projects ensures the effective implementation of the relevant decisions of the governing bodies.

6. UNEP has completed the process of developing its programme of work for 2020–2021, which was approved by the fourth session of UNEA in its decision 4/1. As part of that process, UNEP engaged with the relevant secretariats to ensure that any recent trends and emerging issues were considered during the development of the programme of work.

7. The Law Division facilitates cooperation and coordination among the multilateral environmental agreements and between UNEP and those agreements, working and collaborating closely with the agreement secretariats. This is done to support parties to the respective agreements in the holistic and integrated implementation of their obligations in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the resolutions and decisions of their governing bodies. The Law Division also facilitates policy dialogue among Member States on issues relating to international environmental law and governance, benefitting from a capacity-building project funded by the European Union related to the implementation of multilateral environment agreements in countries in Africa and in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. In addition, the Law Division serves as the secretariat to the African Elephant Fund, as described in section E below.

8. In March 2019, the fourth session of the UNEA was held under the overarching theme “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”. The Assembly, building on the implementation of the outcomes of its first, second and third sessions, adopted a ministerial declaration and a series of resolutions aimed at promoting a culture of innovation in addressing environmental challenges related to poverty and natural resources management, including sustainable food systems, food security and halting biodiversity loss, and on life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency, energy, chemicals and waste management.

9. At its fourth session, UNEA adopted 23 resolutions and 3 decisions,¹ calling for innovative action and strengthened partnerships on the environment. Several of its resolutions relate to biodiversity and ecosystems, resource efficiency, chemicals and waste, and environmental governance. UNEA resolutions that have linkages to the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 and to resolutions that have been adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species are listed below:

- Resolution 4/5: Sustainable infrastructure
- Resolution 4/6: Marine plastic litter and microplastics
- Resolution 4/10: Innovation on biodiversity and land degradation
- Resolution 4/11: Protection of the marine environment from land-based activities
- Resolution 4/12: Sustainable management for global health of mangroves
- Resolution 4/13: Sustainable coral reefs management
- Resolution 4/15: Innovations in sustainable rangelands and pastoralism
- Resolution 4/16: Conservation and sustainable management of peatlands

B. Support for strengthening cooperation, coordination and synergies between the Convention on Migratory Species and other biodiversity-related conventions

10. In its resolution 2/17, on enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions, UNEA recognized the benefits to be gained by implementing the biodiversity-related conventions in a synergistic and coherent manner, and requested the Executive Director of UNEP to undertake further efforts to enhance synergies. UNEP is leading the implementation of the resolution through a project entitled “Environmental treaties programme – realizing synergies for biodiversity”, with support from the European Union and the Government of Switzerland. The project has been developed in close consultation with the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions, including the Convention on Migratory Species. The aim of the project is to support efforts to strengthen synergies in the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions at both the national and international levels.

11. A data reporting tool for multilateral environmental agreements, DaRT, was developed through financial support from Switzerland and the European Union, in response to decision 14/27 of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,² on a process for aligning national reporting, assessment and review, in which explicit mention was made of DaRT. In that decision, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity was requested, subject to the availability of resources, to contribute to the development and testing of DaRT, in collaboration with the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements, with a view to learning from the experiences of Parties in preparing their sixth national reports to the Convention, and to facilitating the use of the tool in reporting processes across the biodiversity-related conventions, as appropriate.

12. The secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species participated in an expert workshop on the roll-out of DaRT for African countries and provided technical feedback for the functional enhancement of DaRT, with a view to promoting synergies among the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements for improved communication, coordination and collaboration at the national level and the enhanced integration and monitoring of biodiversity information. The tool creates a collective national workspace that will help in organizing, sharing and maintaining documents

¹ Available at <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/proceedings-report-ministerial-declaration-resolutions-and-decisions>.

² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-27-en.pdf>.

submitted as part of national reports. The use of the same work space by national focal points is expected to foster communication and cooperation at the national level and to facilitate the re-use of information. The integration of national biodiversity information in one place may also be of value in analysing information relating to multilateral environmental agreements in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to demonstrating the contribution of the agreements towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

13. At the national level, UNEP has guided the development of gender mainstreaming road maps for the national biodiversity strategies and action plans of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar, and provided advice on gender considerations, targets, actions and indicators in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals, and institutional arrangements for the implementation and monitoring of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans. During a workshop on enhancing cooperation and synergy among biodiversity-related conventions in Southeast Asia through the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, held in Phnom Penh on 13 and 14 November 2019, UNEP raised awareness regarding the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 and the element of “ecological connectivity” in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

14. A social media intelligence tool created by the Meltwater company has been made available to the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements to amplify their messages and communication efforts relating to biodiversity and to manage media coverage of biodiversity-related events such as conferences of the parties and major report launches. Training in the use of the tool was provided, including to the communications team of the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species. From 19 to 21 October 2018, UNEP held a communications coordination meeting for public information officers in the margins of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, held in Dubai from 21 to 29 October 2018. The coordination meeting was devoted to sharing communications plans for 2019 and coordination needs, and it included briefings on podcasting and biodiversity, environmental rights and environmental defenders, and served as a platform for engaging with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

C. Support for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

15. The environmental treaties programme has enhanced cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions, Governments and other stakeholders, resulting in the active engagement of the convention secretariats in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the road map to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, scheduled to be held in Kunming, China in October 2020. To that end, UNEP co-organized with the Government of Switzerland and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity a consultation workshop for biodiversity-related conventions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The workshop, which included representatives and members of the bureaux of the three Rio conventions³ and the three chemicals conventions,⁴ was held in Bern, Switzerland in June 2019. Technical information notes on the mapping of the strategic frameworks of the conventions and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets were provided to inform the workshop.⁵ Moreover, UNEP successfully co-hosted the first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, held in Nairobi in August 2019, where Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and observers held discussions on the possible elements of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and adopted conclusions concerning future steps for its preparation.⁶

16. In line with decision XIII/23 of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,⁷ the International Union for Conservation of Nature, through a survey to its members, led a study entitled “Capacity-building and synergies across the biodiversity-related conventions: contributing to the design and subsequent implementation of a

³ Convention on Biological Diversity; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

⁴ Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal; Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

⁵ See <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020/brc-ws-2019-01/documents>.

⁶ See <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020/wg2020-01/documents>.

⁷ Available at <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2016/cop-13/documents>.

long-term strategic framework for capacity-building for biodiversity beyond 2020”.⁸ In addition, UNEP submitted an input paper entitled “Response of UN Environment and UNEP-WCMC to notification 2018-063 from the Executive Secretary inviting views on the preparation, scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework”.⁹ The input paper highlighted the steps needed to create a coherent approach to integrating biodiversity action to produce significant transformational changes across a variety of sectors of the economy and society in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

D. Technical and scientific support from the United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Synergies and partnerships¹⁰

17. The United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is participating in the Working Group on the CMS Family Contributions to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, with a view to ensuring that the priority issue of connectivity is considered within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

National reports¹¹

18. Commissioned by the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, UNEP-WCMC analysed the national reports submitted by the Parties for the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and synthesized the resulting information in a report submitted at the thirteenth meeting. Information on the implementation of the Convention provided in the national reports was also used to carry out an assessment of progress towards attaining the targets in the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023.

19. As part of continued improvements to the online reporting system, additional user roles have been created to give the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species greater administrative control over the reports submitted by parties. Secretariat administrators gained the ability to edit and submit questionnaires on behalf of users, and a new “restricted administrator” role allows selected secretariat users to edit and answer questionnaires on behalf of reporting parties, but without having the full administrative access needed to submit the reports.

Taxonomy and nomenclature¹²

20. Changes in nomenclature adopted at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, as well as associated information on species distributions, were incorporated into “Species+”, a centralized portal providing access to key information on species of global concern.¹³

Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023¹⁴

21. An assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 was produced by UNEP-WCMC, providing a summary of progress towards the attainment of each of the targets in the Strategic Plan. The assessment, which was commissioned by the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, drew on information provided by Parties in their national reports to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties as well as with respect to six priority indicators. The report identifies gaps in information and provides recommendations to inform implementation and data collection for the remainder of the Strategic Plan period.

⁸ https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/capacity_building_and_synergies_-_contribution_to_the_long-term_strategic_framework_for_capacity_building.pdf.

⁹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/Post2020/postsbi/unesp2.pdf>.

¹⁰ See UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP12).

¹¹ See UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.5.

¹² See UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.27.

¹³ Available at <https://www.speciesplus.net/>.

¹⁴ See UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.2 (Rev.COP12).

Improving ways of addressing connectivity in the conservation of migratory species¹⁵

22. Cognizant of the growing threats to biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, UNEP-WCMC has been implementing a project jointly with UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation of deep-sea-living marine resources and ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction.¹⁶ As part of the project, a series of case studies of migratory connectivity in the ocean have been compiled, focussing on three species listed under the Convention on Migratory Species: the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). Information from those studies may play an important role in identifying key sites for conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Moreover, the project has informed various regional and sectoral bodies, including those working under regional seas conventions, on the importance of considering connectivity in the area-based management and governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

E. African Elephant Fund

23. The African Elephant Action Plan was adopted by African elephant range States in March 2010 in the margins of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

24. The African Elephant Fund, established to support the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan, is a partnership venture between 38 African elephant range States, donor States, UNEP, the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, which are working together to curtail the growing threats to elephant populations.

25. At its twelfth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species endorsed the African Elephant Action Plan as the principal strategy for elephant conservation under the Convention (UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.19). The secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species was further directed to cooperate with the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and UNEP to promote fund-raising for the implementation of the Action Plan as part of overall fund-raising initiatives, and to explore opportunities for partnerships with current projects and programmes of that Convention and UNEP to support the African elephant range States in the implementation of the Action Plan. The secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species participated in both the ninth and tenth meetings of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee as an observer. During the tenth meeting, the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species was elected as an ex-officio member, joining UNEP and the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which are also ex-officio members. The secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species thus participated in the eleventh meeting of the Steering Committee as an ex-officio member.

26. By its resolution 16.9, on the African Elephant Action Plan and the African Elephant Fund,¹⁷ the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora invited other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, in particular the Convention on Migratory Species, to support the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan through effective partnerships with African elephant range States. Part of the activities of the joint work programme of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Convention on Migratory Species for the period 2015–2020 requires that the secretariats of the two conventions ensure connectivity between the African Elephant Action Plan and the associated African Elephant Fund. The adoption of the African Elephant Action Plan by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species therefore reinforces collaboration on this important tool for the conservation of the African elephant.

27. The African Elephant Fund Steering Committee works in close collaboration with the programme on the monitoring of illegal killing of elephants, known as the CITES-MIKE Programme, run by the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and hosted by UNEP to monitor trends in the illegal killing of elephants, build management capacity and provide information to help elephant range States to make appropriate management and enforcement decisions.

¹⁵ See UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.26.

¹⁶ See <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/featured-projects/abnj-deep-seas-project>.

¹⁷ <https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/document/E-Res-16-09.pdf>.

28. To date, the African Elephant Fund has implemented 39 projects in the African elephant range States. In 2019, the Fund started implementing 24 projects that had been approved at the tenth and eleventh meetings of the Steering Committee. Highlights of project achievements since the tenth meeting include: the establishment of a canine department by the Uganda Wildlife Authority, which has strengthened the management of the ivory stock pile in Uganda; a biodiversity education programme that has helped to mitigate conflict between farmers and elephants in Ghana; the conduct of elephant dung counts and age structure estimates in the Shimba Hills, the Mau Forest, Mount Elgon, Mount Kenya and the Aberdare Range, which has generated knowledge relating to elephant populations in the tropical forests of Kenya; training to build the capacity of park rangers in Gabon, which has improved the surveillance of elephants in Gabon and reduced poaching incidents; the training of 10 forest officers in monitoring geographic information systems to track elephants; activities to raise awareness among the residents of eight villages to protect elephants, and the training and equipping of 80 farmers with tools to reduced human elephant conflict and restore elephant habitats in Côte d'Ivoire.

29. In the margins of the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee convened two meetings with the African elephant range States to discuss a possible review of the African Elephant Action Plan. As a follow-up, the secretariat of the African Elephant Fund has received further feedback from the range States to proceed with the exercise to revise the Action Plan. The first meeting under this exercise is scheduled to be held on 28 November 2019 in Nairobi.

30. The twelfth meeting of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee is tentatively scheduled to be held in Kampala from 15 to 20 March 2020. The main agenda for the meeting will include, but not be limited to, the review and assessment of newly submitted projects from range States and a review of the progress made in the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan through various projects across the range States. The Steering Committee will also develop a resource mobilization strategy and adopt the rules of procedures for the African Elephant Fund.

F. Tackling illegal killing, taking of and trade in migratory species

31. The taking of marine mammals for activities such as commercial trade or hunting is strictly prohibited, with exceptions under very specific circumstances, pursuant to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.¹⁸ The importance of marine mammals had been recognized through a committed and lengthy process over the course of many years, culminating in the endorsement of a marine mammal action plan in 2008.

32. Efforts for the conservation of threatened and endangered species are currently focussed on: (a) marine mammals (e.g., through the Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network project, transboundary cooperation and marine mammal monitoring to address data gaps identified during the LifeWeb project, and support for sustainable marine mammal watching and the promotion of best practice guidelines); (b) sea turtles (e.g., through support for the elaboration and implementation of sea turtle recovery action plans and the promotion of standard guidelines and criteria for monitoring at nesting sites); (c) invasive species, in particular lionfish, through supporting the regional efforts of relevant partners; (d) illegal trade of species, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and (e) sargassum (e.g., through the development of a cohesive regional strategy, the dissemination of information to raise public awareness, and the sharing of data).

33. In the decision adopted at their tenth meeting,¹⁹ held in Roatán, Honduras on 3 June 2019, the Contracting Parties to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife took the following actions that have relevance to the Convention on Migratory Species:

(a) Decided that the secretariat should work closely with the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles;²⁰

¹⁸ Available at <https://www.ecolex.org/details/treaty/protocol-concerning-specially-protected-areas-and-wildlife-to-the-convention-for-the-protection-and-development-of-the-marine-environment-of-the-wider-caribbean-region-tre-001040/>.

¹⁹ See UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/3, available at <https://www.unenvironment.org/cep/events/conference-parties-cartagena-convention-cops/spaw-cop10>.

²⁰ Available at <http://www.iacseaturtle.org/defaulteng.htm>.

(b) Called upon key countries and territories (Canada, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) to cooperate with the Protocol and the Inter-American Convention to identify and address the threats to the leatherback population in the north-west Atlantic Ocean;

(c) Decided that the secretariat should strengthen and enhance cooperation links with international instruments adopted by the International Maritime Organization, aiming to promote cooperation and integration with the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife and the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region in general, as well as with respect to maritime issues affecting marine biodiversity, including, among others, the transfer of invasive species and diseases as a result of the discharge of ballast water, physical damage to coral reefs or threats to marine mammals due to navigation, shipwrecks, pollution and noise from ships and wrecks, and that the secretariat and regional activity centres should strengthen cooperation accordingly.

G. United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements

34. The United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements provides a one stop shop for comprehensive access to information on multilateral environmental agreements and international environmental governance. UNEP is honoured to have facilitated the information portal initiative, which is financially supported by the European Union, and its sustained growth over the course of more than a decade has been driven by collaboration among the secretariats of more than 20 multilateral environmental agreements. Catering to an average of 35,000 users per month, the portal assists parties in implementing their obligations under the various conventions through intelligent information systems based on agreed standards and open-source technology.

35. Content on the portal relating to the Convention on Migratory Species is available in the Convention's treaty profile,²¹ the biodiversity section of the website, and the online learning tool.

36. Recently, the information portal enhanced the visualization of the collective contribution by the multilateral environmental agreements towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The portal is also increasingly harnessing artificial intelligence in order to more efficiently index large amounts of data, aspects of which involve cooperation with the working group on document standards under the the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

37. The free e-learning platform on the portal caters to over 20,000 registered learners from 190 countries, who have collectively received 10,000 certificates of completion. Over the past year, diploma courses, including a diploma focused on biological diversity,²² have been launched with a view to deeper learning and certification,

38. Thanks to the contributions made by the Convention on Migratory Species and other multilateral environmental agreements, users can now search across 12,000 governing body decisions, 8,000 national reports and 1,000 implementation plans, alongside events, ratification information and information on national focal points. The portal further benefits from its partnership with the ECOLEX website, which provides access to over 150,000 laws (from FAO), 50,000 literature references (from the International Union for Conservation of Nature) and 3,000 judicial cases (from UNEP).

39. The secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species also actively participated in the tenth meeting of the InforMEA Initiative Steering Committee, in June 2019, where the portal initiative celebrated a decade of success,²³ welcomed the World Trade Organization as its most recent observer, and commemorated the visionary support that the initiative had received since its inception from the late Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species, Bradnee Chambers.

H. Great Apes Survival Partnership

40. In an effort to bring about closer cooperation, the secretariat of the Great Apes Survival Partnership, which is hosted by UNEP, participated in the third meeting of Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats (Gorilla Agreement),²⁴ which was held from 18 to

²¹ <https://www.informea.org/en/treaties/convention-migratory-species>.

²² <https://elearning.informea.org/course/view.php?id=57>.

²³ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/blogpost/celebrating-10-years-collaboration-informea-collective-intelligence>.

²⁴ Available at <https://www.cms.int/en/legalinstrument/gorilla-agreement>.

20 June 2019 in Entebbe. The main objectives of the meeting were: (a) to develop a strategy for further implementation of the Gorilla Agreement; (b) to formulate a new programme of work; (c) to review the implementation to date of the Gorilla Agreement and associated action plans and resolutions; and (d) to discuss institutional arrangements for the Gorilla Agreement. The Parties adopted a resolution entitled “Strengthening cooperation between the Gorilla Agreement and GRASP” (UNEP/GA/MOP3/Resolution.3.4).

41. The Great Apes Survival Partnership secured funding from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany to support transboundary collaboration for the conservation of the critically endangered Cross River gorilla. The Convention on Migratory Species is contributing to that project and analysing the implementation of Convention provisions through national legislation in Cameroon and Nigeria.

42. The Vanishing Treasures project, funded by Luxembourg with 9 million euros for the period 2018–2022, aims to protect three mountain flagship species (the mountain gorilla in Uganda and Rwanda, the snow leopard in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the Bengal tiger in Bhutan) and to enhance the climate resilience of mountain communities and ecosystems by applying climate-smart conservation and ecosystem-based adaptation approaches in support of sustainable livelihoods and land use. The Great Apes Survival Partnership is implementing the mountain gorilla component of the project.

I. Protection of seagrass habitats

43. Seagrass provides food and habitat to several charismatic migratory species, such as turtles and dugongs. These species, despite being listed in the red list of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as being endangered and vulnerable, respectively, can act as flagship species (ambassadors) for the protection and conservation of seagrass meadows. The migratory nature of these species means that international cooperative activities across jurisdictional boundaries within their migratory ranges are vital to their survival.

44. As part of a global effort to conserve dugongs and their seagrass habitats, the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, with financing from the Global Environment Facility, implementation support from UNEP and technical support provided pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range (Dugong MoU),²⁵ is executing the first regional project in eight countries in the Indo-Pacific region (namely Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu). The project also aims to mobilize community participation in and ownership of dugong and seagrass conservation. The memorandum of understanding entered into effect on October 2007 and was signed by 27 States. The secretariat of the Dugong Memorandum of Understanding developed the Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project, a four-year multinational effort funded by the International Climate Initiative covering 43 national projects aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of efforts to protect seagrass ecosystems and dugong populations.

45. The conservation of migratory species requires protection of habitats from loss and degradation. There is no simple solution to environmental degradation; success depends on partnerships and coordination at all levels (nationally, regionally and globally). UNEP, in collaboration with the GRID-Arendal foundation, created the International Seagrass Experts Network – a consortium of experts and practitioners convened to enhance scientific knowledge, consolidate management best practices and develop policy recommendations with respect to seagrass conservation.

46. **Seagrass ecosystem services** – In partnership with the GRID-Arendal foundation and the International Seagrass Experts Network, UNEP is developing a global synthesis report on seagrass ecosystem services that will highlight the status of seagrass ecosystems globally and serve as a call to action to managers and decision makers. UNEP recognizes that there is a great opportunity for the inclusion of seagrass beds into nationally determined contributions.

47. **Climate change mitigation and adaptation** – Climate change is a global threat to critical marine habitats, such as coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses, which sustain migratory species. Given the role of seagrass beds as significant carbon dioxide sinks at the biosphere level, maintaining healthy seagrass ecosystems will mitigate two of humankind’s greatest challenges: food insecurity and climate change. To that end, UNEP, under its small-scale funding programme and in collaboration with the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, is funding the development of a carbon offsetting

²⁵ <https://www.cms.int/dugong/en/page/mou-text>.

project involving seagrass beds. This would be an extension from mangroves to seagrass beds of the carbon offsetting project “Mikoko Pamoja”, which is designed to facilitate an integrated ecosystem approach to resource management.

48. **Locally managed marine areas** – A change in governance structure from a top-down approach to a bottom-up approach can improve the effectiveness of resource management and conservation. UNEP, in collaboration with Edinburgh Napier University, is preparing a paper on the opportunities and challenges for community-based seagrass conservation. The findings presented in the paper are likely to assist in the development and establishment of locally managed marine areas where local communities can take charge of, manage and benefit from the resources of those marine areas.

III. Administrative and financial management support provided to the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species

49. **Umoja** - The United Nations Secretariat has deployed in various pilot offices the grantor management, fundraising, strategic management, and budget planning and consolidation modules of its enterprise resource planning system, Umoja. UNEP has implemented the grantor management module in all its convention secretariats, divisions and regional offices, thereby standardizing partner engagement. The staff of the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species have received training on the new applications, which has contributed to the successful engagement of the secretariat with its implementing partners.

50. The United Nations Secretariat has employed the Agile methodology of systems development with a view to making it possible for implementing partners to submit applications to carry out defined programmes that will be launched through the grantor management module.

51. **Delegation of authority** - On 18 December 2018, the Secretary General of the United Nations issued a new framework for the delegation of authority effective January 2019 (ST/SGB/2019/2). The objective of the new framework is to transfer centrally held authority closer to the point of service delivery. On 4 November, UNEP adopted an updated delegation of authority policy and framework, in line with that issued by the Secretary General. The current delegation of authority policy and framework for the management and administration of multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, in effect since November 2016, will be updated early in 2020 after consultations with the multilateral environmental agreement secretariats.

52. **Financial advisory unit for the multilateral environmental agreements** - The Executive Director decided to provide extra administrative coordination to the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements through the establishment of a dedicated unit within the Corporate Services Division and under the supervision of the Division Director. Support provided by the unit includes budget administration, audit coordination and risk management, backstopping of administrative staff, and treasury functions for multilateral funds.

53. **Programme support costs** - In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/217 and United Nations procedures stipulated in the administrative instruction on programme support accounts (ST/AI/286), programme support costs are charged on all extrabudgetary resources at a standard rate of 13 per cent to recover the incremental costs incurred while supporting activities financed through such resources. The amount of programme support resources available in any given year is dependent on the income generated for that purpose in the previous year. The administrative staff and activities of the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species are funded through programme support resources, which in recent years have been insufficient to meet expected obligations. The Executive Director has requested heads of office to reconsider any requests for programme support cost waivers that would substantially reduce programme support resources.

54. **Settlement of contributions** - The United Nations Secretariat adopted the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in 2014. Umoja implements strict IPSAS-based liquidity management, which requires that cash be available for the settlement of payments. Parties are therefore encouraged to settle their assessed contributions in full early in the year to guarantee continuity of operations under the Convention on Migratory Species. Those Parties that are in arrears are requested to engage with the Convention secretariat on settlement modalities.