



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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

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 twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, to be held in Manila from 23 to 28 October 2017. It provides information on the secretariat services provided by UNEP in support of the Convention since the forty-fifth meeting of its Standing Committee.
2. Following the forty-third meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, held in Quito on 9 November 2014, the Executive Director of UNEP delivered reports on programmatic and administrative support for the Convention at the forty-fourth and forty-fifth meetings of the Standing Committee (UNEP/CMS/StC44/8 and UNEP/CMS/StC45/Doc.8).
3. Building on the previous reports provided to the Standing Committee at its forty-fifth meeting, section II of the present report provides updates on programmatic collaboration between UNEP and the secretariat on the implementation of outcomes of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Quito from 4 to 9 November 2014. 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. Contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly

4. UNEP has continued to strengthen its programmatic support for the work of the Convention on Migratory Species and its agreements. Regular consultations are taking place on programmatic cooperation.
5. UNEP is well positioned to make a positive contribution to the work on the integrated perspective and enhancement of the implementation of the Convention and other instruments.
6. The Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 is reflected in and integrated into the UNEP medium-term strategy for 2018–2021 and relevant subprogrammes of the programme of work for 2018–2019, in particular the subprogrammes “Healthy and productive ecosystems”, “Environmental governance” and “Environment under review”, adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly in its resolution 2/20. At its second session, the Assembly adopted several resolutions, reported at the forty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee, that have an important impact on the implementation of the Strategic Plan as part of a mutually beneficial relationship between the Convention and UNEP. It is important to mention, in particular, the following resolutions: resolution 2/5, on delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; resolution 2/7, on sound management of chemicals and waste; resolution 2/10, on oceans and seas; resolution 2/11, on marine plastic litter and microplastics; resolution 2/12, on sustainable coral reefs management; resolution 2/13, on sustainable management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication; resolution 2/14, on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products; resolution 2/16, on mainstreaming of biodiversity for well-being; resolution 2/17, on enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions; and resolution 2/18, on the relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats.

B. Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

7. UNEP is responsible for methodology development and the reporting of data on relevant indicators at the national, regional and global levels as input for the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Although Sustainable Development Goals 6, 13, 14 and 15 and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are at the heart of its work, UNEP focuses on fostering ecosystem management with a view to delivering on all Sustainable Development Goals.

8. UNEP is the custodian agency for 26 of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and reported to the Secretary-General on six of those indicators in 2016, making it well placed to ensure that countries are able to track their progress. UNEP is setting the stage for broader support for the coherent implementation of the Goals and for linking that implementation to that of other global environmental goals, including those of the Convention on Migratory Species.
9. In its resolution 2/5, the United Nations Environment Assembly emphasized that UNEP had an important role in the follow-up and review of progress in implementing the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda. Also in that resolution, the Assembly committed to conveying the main messages of its sessions to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and encouraged the Executive Director to take action to enhance coordinated, coherent and integrated delivery within the United Nations system on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda.
10. Many developments are ongoing to that end in the context of inter-agency mechanisms, including the Environment Management Group. Those developments include the United Nations system-wide framework of strategies on the environment, which is now in the implementation phase; guidance documents for the United Nations system on Sustainable Development Goals that fully integrate the environment; and a host of regional and national efforts leading to integration of the various dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.
11. UNEP continues to work closely on metadata and reporting with the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Migratory Species, so as to take into account relevant targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda. The website Environment Live (uneplive.org) covers the internationally agreed environmental goals and provides credible, up-to-date information to support the follow-up to and review of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels, ensuring good traceability of the data and the information made accessible through the website. In addition, further development is taking place during phase II of the InforMEA project (informea.org). These efforts are contributing to the implementation of resolutions 11.7, on enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention through a process to review implementation, and 11.10, on synergies and partnerships, of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

C. Tackling illegal killing and taking of and trade in migratory species

12. In response to Conference of the Parties resolution 11.16, on the prevention of illegal killing and taking of and trade in migratory birds, and Environment Assembly resolution 2/14, on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, UNEP is drafting a report providing a thorough assessment of best practices in local community involvement in wildlife management, drawing on diverse examples from around the world, and presenting lessons learned from various approaches to addressing the unsustainable use of and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. The analysis will endeavour to provide a comprehensive understanding of local community involvement in wildlife management, providing a solid background for a more informed policymaking process, thereby contributing to the integration of the role and involvement of local communities and indigenous groups in ensuring the sustainable use of wildlife and the prevention of wildlife crime. In addition, a report containing a preliminary assessment of the spatial distribution of various threats to wildlife and biodiversity, including the illegal wildlife trade, and the relationships between those threats, was released at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2016.
13. In addition, in support of target 15 of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023, UNEP continued to strengthen international efforts to combat the illegal trade in wildlife with the launch of the “Wild for Life” campaign at the second session of the Environment Assembly. The initiative is aimed at promoting collaboration, policy implementation and grassroots participation to raise the awareness of communities in source and destination countries of action being taken to tackle poaching.
14. UNEP is increasingly engaged in activities aimed at combating environmental crimes, especially those involving illegal exploitation of natural resources. In particular, UNEP has sought to address the issue through strengthening the evidence base for intervention, establishing national policies and capacity-building programmes and raising awareness of the issue to decrease demand. On World Wildlife Day on 3 March 2017, the second phase of the “Wild for Life” communication campaign was launched, with five new species threatened by illegal trade added to the platform. The campaign has now grown into the largest UNEP advocacy effort ever, reaching over 1 billion people. The campaign has generated 4.5 million social media interactions, and 40,000 people have chosen a kindred species.

15. As part of its promotion of the environmental rule of law to combat the illegal trade in wildlife and the initiation of a comprehensive awareness-raising strategy on the implications of that trade, UNEP is currently working on its first report on the global environmental rule of law. Within that context, UNEP intends to facilitate an expert process to ascertain and document the current status of knowledge of crimes, including illegal trade in wildlife, that have a serious impact on the environment, and to identify the interlinkages between those crimes.

D. Marine plastic debris and microplastics

16. A massive open online course on marine litter (a follow-up to the first online course, which ended in January 2016) was finalized in English in May 2016 and in Spanish in November 2016. Two-week leadership modules are being prepared in Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese and Russian, within the framework of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, for which UNEP serves as the secretariat.

17. In addition, as part of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Clean Seas campaign on marine litter was launched in February 2017 (www.cleanseas.org). It focuses on achieving a drastic reduction of single-use plastics and a global ban on microplastics, such as those used in personal care and cosmetic products.

18. A training activity to assess the prevalence of microplastics in fishing areas was undertaken in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru. Fourteen persons from six different countries participated in the course and were trained on protocols for assessing the level of microplastics in water, sand and marine fish. The activity will lead to the establishment of local and regional pilot programmes based on the proposals submitted by the training participants.

19. It is significant that 100 national and subnational governments around the world have taken measures to ban or discourage the use of plastic bags. That is an encouraging start in the fight against marine litter. If more countries take action, it could have a huge impact on the global problem of marine pollution, as plastic bags are pervasive throughout the world's oceans.

20. In its resolution 1/6, on marine plastic debris and microplastics, the Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director to present a study on marine plastic debris and microplastics. The report, entitled *Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics: Global Lessons and Research to Inspire Action and Guide Policy Change*, which was made available for the second session of the Assembly, provided a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge; an evidence base for urgent action, outlining potential ways for taking action; key conclusions; and a set of recommendations, including with regard to future research. UNEP views the report as an input to the implementation of Conference of the Parties resolution 11.30, on management of marine debris, in which the Conference invited UNEP to continue and increase its leading role in acting as a moderator between the different stakeholders in the maritime industry and in facilitating coordination to enable the implementation of best practice measures. The secretariat of the Convention was one of the peer reviewers of the study.

21. UNEP ecosystems management regional subprogramme coordinators for Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Europe continued to work in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023 by undertaking and facilitating various activities and workshops in their regions covering, among other subjects, the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans as the principal instruments for implementing the goals of biodiversity-related conventions.

22. UNEP, as an implementing agency, has been supporting the implementation of the project entitled “Enhancing the conservation effectiveness of seagrass ecosystems supporting globally significant populations of dugongs across the Indian and Pacific Ocean basins”, funded by the Global Environment Facility. The project is aimed at improving the protection and conservation of dugongs and their seagrass habitats around the world, focusing on the dugong range States, namely, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste and Vanuatu. This project is the first coordinated global effort to conserve dugongs and their seagrass habitats, and contributes to the implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range. At the heart of the project lies the ambition of mobilizing community participation and ownership of dugong and seagrass conservation, focusing on introducing sustainable fisheries practices and innovative financial incentives, establishing locally managed marine protected areas and mainstreaming dugong and seagrass conservation priorities into national and regional policies and planning. The project is implemented through 41 project partners, which are government, nongovernmental and community organizations located in the eight dugong range countries. The project is being carried out between January 2015 and December 2018.

23. In September 2016, UNEP and the secretariat to the Convention, in cooperation with the Caribbean Community and Common Market, organized the first Caribbean regional accession workshop aimed at strengthening awareness of the Convention in the Caribbean region.
24. In addition, the workshop was aimed at facilitating communication and building synergies between countries and the secretariat. The workshop was delivered with technical and financial support from the African, Caribbean and Pacific multilateral environmental agreements phase 2 project, and was held in Bridgetown from 31 August to 2 September 2016. The workshop was one of a series planned around the world aimed at increasing accession to the Convention. Financial support was provided by the European Commission programme on capacity-building related to multilateral environmental agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.
25. Most of the participants were government representatives from non-parties to the Convention in the region, namely, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Representatives of non-governmental organizations and of UNEP and the Caribbean Community and Common Market secretariat also participated in the workshop. Information about the national biodiversity strategies and action plan development and compliance with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals were analysed. The workshop provided an opportunity for parties and non-parties to the Convention in the region to exchange experiences and discuss challenges.

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

26. Since the adoption by the Conference of the Parties of resolution 11.10, on synergies and partnerships, UNEP has continued to work closely with the secretariat of the Convention, including in the implementation of that resolution and of resolutions 11.2, on the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023; 11.3, on enhancing synergies and common services among the family of Convention on Migratory Species instruments; resolution 11.11, on enhancing the relationship between the Convention family and civil society; resolution 11.16, on the prevention of illegal killing and taking of and trade in migratory birds; resolution 11.26, on the programme of work on climate change and migratory species; and resolution 11.27, on renewable energy and migratory species.
27. In its resolution 2/17, the Environment Assembly 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. The implementation of that resolution creates further opportunities for collaboration and cooperation in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to biodiversity, including those under the Convention on Migratory Species. The resolution also builds on Conference of the Parties resolution 11.10 and related resolutions of biodiversity-related conventions.
28. At its thirteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity invited the Parties, through its decision XIII/24, to invite the Convention on Migratory Species to provide its input to the Convention on Biological Diversity sixth national reporting process and the development of a follow-up strategic plan for biodiversity after 2020, and to cooperate with the other biodiversity-related conventions through the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions to implement the decision. UNEP will provide its support and input to those processes.

F. Great Apes Survival Partnership

29. The Great Apes Survival Partnership is a unique alliance of 105 national Governments, conservation organizations, research institutions and United Nations agencies that works with field projects undertaken through collaboration by its members. Those members include member States, research institutions, conservation organizations, United Nations agencies and private supporter companies, all of whom are committed to ensuring the long-term survival of chimpanzees, orangutans, gorillas and bonobos, as well as their habitats in Africa and Asia. The Partnership's policy agenda uses legislative, educational and communication resources to effect change. The Partnership and the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species have agreed to collaborate on the implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats. The Agreement was established in 2008 and covers 10 of the 21 Partnership range States. The Convention is a charter partner of the Partnership and is represented on its Executive Committee. The Partnership and the secretariat of the Convention will work to merge their focal points and technical advisory groups, and will host regular meetings of the parties to the Gorilla Agreement at relevant Partnership events. They will also seek to

undertake joint projects on behalf of gorilla conservation and will utilize the legal foundation of the Gorilla Agreement wherever necessary in the 10 gorilla range States.

30. In September 2016, the Partnership launched the Apes Seizure Database in response to the Secretary-General's call to ensure a coherent response by the United Nations system to the illegal trade in wildlife. The database, which will track illicit traffic in gorillas and other great apes, will support the Gorilla Agreement mandate to conserve gorillas and their habitat and will be used to support law enforcement efforts.

G. Multilateral environmental agreement information and knowledge management initiative

31. The multilateral environmental agreement information and knowledge management initiative is facilitated and supported by UNEP. The aim of the initiative is to assist parties in implementing their obligations under the various conventions through interoperable information systems that adhere to global standards, interoperability and open-source technology. The secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species is a member of the initiative and actively participates in its steering committee and working group meetings.

32. The United Nations information portal on multilateral environmental agreements (InforMEA) project, which comes under the auspices of the multilateral environmental agreement information and knowledge management initiative, seeks to enhance global access to information on multilateral environmental agreements and to contribute to the capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals, including those enshrined in multilateral environmental agreements.

33. The secretariat of the Convention plays an active role in the promotion of interoperability across multilateral environmental agreements and the seamless interaction between flagship knowledge tools to support the enhanced implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and international environmental law.

34. The Convention has contributed to and successfully harnessed the opportunities provided by the multilateral environmental agreements information and knowledge management initiative. Following the upgrade of and improvement to its web infrastructure, it is now at the forefront of the provision of information relating to multilateral environmental agreements.

35. Most recently, the secretariat added the documents and publications relating to the Convention to the library of documents to be launched under InforMEA II. The secretariat also participates in ongoing efforts by the multilateral environmental agreements information and knowledge management initiative to test auto-tagging tools and to harmonize taxonomy standards across species-related multilateral environmental agreements.

36. Thanks to the contributions made by the Convention and other multilateral environmental agreements, users can search 10,000 governing body decisions, 5,000 national reports and 500 implementation plans alongside news, events, ratification information and information on national focal points. The free InforMEA e-learning platform caters to over 3,000 learners from 175 countries and the Law and Environment Ontology provides definitions about and relationships between key concepts to help users navigate through the terminology of multilateral environmental agreements.

37. Further development will take place during phase II of the InforMEA project, including the establishment of a library of publications relating to multilateral environmental agreements and partners (by topics and about negotiations), enhancements to the e-learning tool, regional sections on the InforMEA portal and sections on internationally agreed goals and how they relate to the provisions of multilateral environmental agreements.

38. Another endeavour is the development of voluntary standard filters for national reports submitted pursuant to biodiversity-related conventions. The aim is to facilitate easy access to report content by different stakeholder groups, based on their particular point of interest, whether it be species, family names, themes and topics, internationally agreed goals, geographical areas or the environmental institutions involved. The secretariat of the Convention is committed to contributing to the linking of different taxonomy standards in that context.

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

A. Delegation of authority

39. UNEP has adopted a delegation of authority policy and framework for the management and administration of the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, which came into force on 1 November 2016. It simplifies, standardizes, streamlines and increases the transparency of the delegation of authority from the Executive Director to the heads of secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and of other bodies for which UNEP provides either the secretariat or secretariat functions. The policy was adopted following consultations with the secretariats and takes into consideration their comments.

B. Memorandum of understanding

40. In accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 2/18, entitled “Relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats”, UNEP is working with the secretariats to develop a flexible draft template of options for the provision of secretariat services in an appropriate form. The template will build on existing memorandums of understanding with governing bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements.

C. Standardized guidelines and procedures for financial matters

41. UNEP has prepared standardized guidelines and procedures for financial matters for the multilateral environment agreements for which it provides secretariat services. The financial guidelines will assist the governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements in budget preparation, financial monitoring, preparation of financial statements and other financial matters. The guidelines are part of the work of UNEP in the area of enhancing internal processes and policies to make them more efficient, streamlined and transparent (see annex I).

D. Implications of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards on the operational budgets of multilateral environmental agreements

42. UNEP has prepared and shared a report for the governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements in response to the request from the Environment Assembly contained in paragraph 6 of resolution 2/18. The report provides information for those governing bodies on the implications of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards for their operational budgets (see annex II). Additional information will be provided as and when it is received from the relevant departments of the Secretariat.

E. Support provided to the Secretariat from programme support costs

43. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/217 and the United Nations procedures for the approval and management of programme support accounts (ST/AI/286), all trust funds are charged for programme support costs. UNEP is part of the Secretariat and operates within the guidelines established by the Department of Management and approved by the General Assembly. The standard programme support cost charge is 13 per cent. The purpose of programme support cost charges is to recover the incremental costs incurred when supporting activities are financed through extrabudgetary contributions. For UNEP, the term “extrabudgetary resources” refers to trust funds as distinct from core budgetary resources, namely the Environment Fund.

44. Following United Nations standard procedures, the amount of resources available to UNEP and the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements for programme support in any given year is based on the income received for that purpose in the previous year.

45. UNEP has developed simple, clear and transparent management procedures for programme support costs and has consulted with the secretariats on the issue.

46. All convention trust funds continue to be administered by the Executive Director of UNEP and their validation has been extended to 31 December 2019.
