

53rd Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 19 – 20 October 2022

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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

1. The present report provides an update on the work of UNEP relevant to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), since the last report (UNEP/CMS/StC52/Doc.7) was submitted to the 52nd Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee, held virtually from 21 to 29 September 2021. The present report focuses on the period between August 2021 and July 2022.
2. During this period, the CMS Secretariat engaged closely with UNEP through various mechanisms that have been put into place to enhance cooperation and policy coherence between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), such as periodic meetings with UNEP Executive Director and the Director of Law Division and the MEAs Focal Points Network coordinated by Law Division. Specific topics that bring the MEAs together include gender and the UN development system reform, in which actions to implement the MEAs are being monitored in the cooperation frameworks through a dedicated indicator.¹
3. MEAs are invited to update the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP on major outcomes by providing inputs to the quarterly reports of the Executive Director.

Resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) and the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP

4. The resumed fifth session of UNEA (UNEA 5.2) convened in a hybrid format, virtually and physically in Nairobi, from 28 February to 2 March 2022. This was followed by the first special session of UNEA, on 3 and 4 March 2022, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNEP. The Executive Secretary of CMS participated actively in both UNEA 5.2 and UNEP@50, with the Executive Secretary making statements in the plenary meetings. At the special session, Member States adopted a political declaration, which contained the following paragraphs related to MEAs, which the Standing Committee may wish to note:

7. *Renew* our support for strengthening the collaboration and cooperation between MEAs and the UNEP while respecting their independence and respective mandates, with a view to achieving progressive improvement in the state of the global environment, as well as in the provision of the means of implementation, and, to that end, invite the governing bodies of MEAs to collaborate with the UNEA, as appropriate, to promote policy coherence and its effective implementation;

8. ...inviting the governing bodies of all the MEAs, in particular those hosted by the UNEP, to consider convening, within their mandates, their meetings more frequently in Nairobi;

17. *Encourage* Member States and members of specialized agencies that have not yet done so to consider ratifying relevant MEAs and to effectively implement them, including through the incorporation of their provisions into national legal systems as appropriate;

21. *Call* for the urgent fulfilment of existing financial commitments under various MEAs to assist developing countries, and stress the importance of fulfilling relevant pledges;

UNEA 5.2 outcomes

¹ Indicator 2.3.2: percentage of Cooperation Frameworks developed in the last year that contain actions to implement: i. nationally determined contributions; ii. national biodiversity strategies and action plans; iii. other MEAs implementation plans.

5. At UNEA 5.2 Member States took up substantive matters that were postponed from the first segment of UNEA and adopted the ministerial declaration entitled “Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals” as well as 14 resolutions and 1 decision. The CMS secretariat provided technical inputs to several key resolutions.

6. Of these outcomes, the following resolutions may be of interest to the Standing Committee:

Resolution 5/1 on *Animal welfare-environment-sustainable development nexus*, among others, requests the Executive Director of UNEP to produce a report, in close collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), as well as with the One Health High-Level Expert Panel, on the nexus between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development.

Resolution 5/5 on *Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development* defines the concept of “nature-based solutions,” acknowledging that the concept is cognizant of and in harmony with the concept of ecosystem-based approaches identified under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other management and conservation approaches carried out under existing national policy and legislative frameworks and established under relevant MEAs. The resolution requests the Executive Director to convene intergovernmental consultations to compile examples of best practice and promote a common understanding for the implementation of nature-based solutions.

Resolution 5/6 on *Biodiversity and health* requests the Executive Director to encourage actions that have positive benefits for the environment, given the links between human, animal and ecosystem health, and to support Member States in raising awareness of the drivers of biodiversity loss and their interlinkages with the emergence and spread of infectious and non-communicable diseases in collaboration with FAO, WHO and WOAH. The resolution also encourages Member States to mainstream sustainable use, conservation and restoration of biodiversity into sectoral policies and programmes with a view to preventing current and future health risks.

Resolution 5/8 on *Science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution* establishes a science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution, whose principal functions include, among other things, undertaking horizon scanning to identify issues of relevance to policymakers and proposing evidence-based options to address them; conducting assessments; providing up-to-date information; and facilitating information-sharing with countries.

Resolution 5/9 on *Sustainable and resilient infrastructure* encourages Member States and other stakeholders to promote sustainable and inclusive infrastructure that maintains and enhances ecological connectivity, avoids further fragmentation and minimizes other potential impacts on ecosystems and livelihoods. The resolution specifically mentions CMS for the decisions adopted on infrastructure and biodiversity and draws attention to the relevant initiatives launched by CMS to maintain and restore ecological connectivity.

Resolution 5/14 on *End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument* is one of the most significant outcomes adopted at UNEA 5.2, which paves the way for the establishment of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (“the instrument”). The resolution requests the Executive Director to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) to develop this instrument, with the ambition of completing its work by the end of 2024.

Leadership Dialogue with MEAs

7. At UNEA 5.2, a dedicated Leadership Dialogue with MEAs was organized for the first time. The Leadership Dialogue, which focused on strengthening the implementation of and compliance with MEAs in an integrated manner, drew a great deal of interest from Member States and relevant stakeholders. The Executive Secretary of CMS, Amy Fraenkel, contributed to the discussion, emphasizing the importance of political will and joint action to address the common drivers of environmental degradation and bringing the value of environment into government decision-making at the national level.

Updates on the relevant work of UNEP

International legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

8. Following the meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare for the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC), held from 30 May to 1 June 2022 in Dakar, Senegal, the first session of the INC will take place from 28 November to 2 December 2022 in Punta del Este, Uruguay. Member States are expected to consider broad options for structure of the instrument, as well as its potential elements, including key concepts, procedures and mechanisms, including for funding and stakeholder engagement. The instrument on plastic pollution is expected to address the full life cycle of plastics, from production to consumption and disposal.
9. To support the ad hoc open-ended working group, the UN Environment Management Group (EMG), in which CMS is a member, prepared a report in response to UNEA resolution 4/6 on *Marine plastic litter and microplastics*². Entitled “An overview of UN activities and initiatives related to marine litter and microplastics”, the EMG report features CMS as one of the key conventions of relevance to the instrument, highlighting the resolutions the Conference of the Parties to the CMS have adopted on plastic pollution and the 2019 celebration of the Migratory Bird Day under the theme of “Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution”, organized jointly with AEWA.
10. Supporting documents are under preparation by UNEP for consideration at the first meeting of the INC, including an official document mandated by the open-ended working group, entitled “Overview of information to promote cooperation and coordination with relevant regional and international conventions, instruments and organizations”³ This document was prepared in consultation with relevant MEAs, including the CMS and its family of instruments, and refers to the adoption of a series of resolutions on the management of marine debris, including resolutions 12.20, 11.30, 10.4 and 13.122-125 on “Impacts of plastic pollution on aquatic, terrestrial and aviation species”.

CounterMEASURE-II Project

11. In June 2020, UNEP launched the Counter MEASURE II project on the promotion of action against marine plastic litter in Asia and the Pacific (CM2) with US\$ 5.7 million funded by the Government of Japan. Implemented over the period June 2020 to March 2022, the project aimed to generate and disseminate scientific knowledge on plastic pollution in the Mekong, Ganges and selected rivers in Sri Lanka and Myanmar to inform policy and decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and global levels.
12. A component of CM2 focused on furthering research and policy advocacy on the impacts of plastic pollution on wildlife, particularly migratory species. This component of the project was implemented by the CMS secretariat in collaboration with the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the UNEP India Office.
13. In the context of CM2, the Forum on Plastic-free Rivers in Asia was organized virtually from 8 to 10 March 2022 on “Reducing River Plastic Litter through Science, Policy and Citizen Action” where the findings of various studies conducted by the project, such as the *Report on Impacts of Plastic Pollution on Freshwater Aquatic, Terrestrial and Aviation Migratory Species in the Asia and the Pacific Region* were presented and discussed.

Environmental Treaties Programme

14. With financial support from the European Union, Switzerland, the Nordic Council and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the UNEP project “Realizing synergies for biodiversity” under the Environmental Treaties Programme (November 2017–December 2022) promoted synergies and cooperation across biodiversity-related MEAs. As a member of the project

² Paragraph 8: “Invites the Environment Management Group to engage in and contribute to the work of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics by providing, inter alia, mapping of all United Nations agencies, programmes, initiatives and other sources of expertise relating to marine litter, including plastic litter and microplastics;”

³ This document aligns with paragraph 3(k) of resolution 5/14, which decided to include provisions “To promote cooperation and coordination with relevant regional and international conventions, instruments and organizations, while recognizing their respective mandates, avoiding duplication and promoting complementarity of action”.

Steering Committee, the CMS secretariat collaborated with UNEP to ensure the success of the project, whose activities consisted of, among others, (1) providing inputs to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and related issues, (2) supporting cooperation among the communication officers of different biodiversity-related MEAs, (3) preparing and disseminating guidance materials related to enhancing synergies and (4) providing support for regional and national level work to benefit from implementing multiple biodiversity-related MEAs in a synergistic manner. The project developed a number of practical tools, including Data and Reporting Tool (DaRT), recognized under CMS resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP13).

15. UNEP and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) also collaborated with the CMS secretariat for the development of three “compendia of guidance” on synergies, covering guidance on achieving synergies among biodiversity-related conventions at the national level, guidance on key global databases related to biodiversity-related conventions, and guidance for capturing, managing and using data and information.

Synergies across clusters

16. In 2021, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Minamata Convention on Mercury jointly published an exploratory study entitled “Interlinkages between the Chemicals and Waste Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Biodiversity: Key Insights”, with a view to positioning the four conventions to contribute to ongoing discussions and the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and future work of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity-related instruments.
17. With support from the UNEP WCMC, UNEP also organized an online Expert Consultation Workshop on Strengthening Coordination and Collaboration between Biodiversity and Chemicals and Waste Clusters in September 2021, with active participation from the CMS secretariat. The outcomes of the workshop contributed to the report by the Nordic Council of Ministers, entitled “Strengthening collaboration and coordination between biodiversity and chemicals and waste clusters”.
18. The CMS secretariat is also engaging actively with the UNEP Secretariat in the ongoing efforts to review global progress in combatting pollution.

Health and Environment

19. On 8 September 2021, UNEP collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WAHO, founded as OIE) in organizing the Asia-Pacific Tripartite plus UNEP Webinar on “Wildlife Health for One Health”. This was held in the lead-up to the ninth Asia-Pacific Workshop on Multisectoral Collaboration at the Animal-Human-Ecosystems Interface, scheduled for November 2021. Approximately 500 members of governments and other stakeholders engaged in discussing and sharing guidance, tools and experiences for improving wildlife health for One Health across the Asia-Pacific region.
20. In March 2022, the establishment of a new Nature for Health Fund led by UNEP in partnership with the Government of Germany, the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat, UNDP, WHO, WAHO and the Eco Health Alliance was announced. The initiative is supported by 50 million euros in seed funding from Germany. It is well aligned with the new resolution on Biodiversity and Health adopted at UNEA 5.2. As the Nature for Health activities develop and in-country work begins, the Consortium Partners may engage with other relevant institutions and conventions such as the CMS. UNEP, as the host of the Secretariat and core consortium partner, will encourage appropriate engagement with all relevant multilateral and regional agreements.
21. In April 2022, UNEP became a full partner in the Quadripartite Alliance for One Health with FAO, WHO and WAHO. A joint plan of action has been developed, highlighting the linkages between environment, human and animal health, including but not limited to expanded work on addressing zoonotic diseases and environmental dimensions. In addition, UNEP, with the support of Germany, created the new Nature for Health Fund to support the implementation of the One Health approach in countries with an emphasis on investments in nature to support prevention of the spread of zoonotic

diseases with pandemic potential. Currently capitalized at 50 million Euros, the Fund includes other partners and the Secretariat will be hosted at UNEP. The CMS secretariat has been invited to have a representative on the UNEP wide working group for One Health, which meets regularly to share information and to get inputs into various initiatives for UNEP as part of the Quadripartite Alliance.

Montevideo Programme V

22. At the fourth session of UNEA held in 2019, Member States adopted the fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V) for the decade beginning in 2020. The Programme promotes the development and implementation of environmental rule of law, strengthens the related capacities in countries and contributes to the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The first segment of the first global meeting of national focal points for the Programme was held virtually in June 2021, where, among others, the Law and Environment Assistance Platform (LEAP), the digital backbone of the Programme was launched with inputs from various partners, including the CMS secretariat. The second segment convened in Nairobi, in person, in June 2022 and provided guidance to UNEP on relevant institutional arrangements for the programme and identified initial priorities for implementation in the field of environmental rule of law.

InforMEA

23. UNEP hosts the United Nations Information Portal on MEAs (InforMEA), which provides a one stop shop for comprehensive access to information on MEAs. In addition to treaty texts and relevant national action plans, reports and court decisions, InforMEA provides access to over 40 courses on international environmental law and governance. The CMS secretariat continues to provide support to InforMEA by providing advice on matters related to outreach and visibility, interoperability and data exchange, e-learning, and semantic management. There was an overhaul and expansion of the CMS course, which introduces the history, role and organizational structure of CMS, the obligations of CMS Parties towards species listed on the Appendices of the Convention, and the instruments that may be developed under CMS. The new course was launched at the beginning of 2022. The CMS secretariat also actively participated in the 12th meeting of the InforMEA Initiative Steering Committee, held virtually on 16 November 2021 to guide the work of InforMEA over the next year as the it embarks on its third phase.

UN development system reform

24. UNEP works with countries to promote integrated approaches to planning and implementation that support the incorporation of environmental perspectives into country plans and policies, with a focus on climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. UNEP does this through providing data, analysis and expertise; building the institutional and human capacities of UN Resident Coordinator Offices, UN Country Teams and governments; and supporting the development of policy and legal frameworks. UNEP also assists countries in aligning their relevant national policies and development objectives with MEAs, the Sustainable Development Goals and UNEA resolutions and monitors the integration, mainstreaming and implementation of MEAs in the UN common country analyses and cooperation frameworks as part of the UN development system reform agenda.

Administrative and financial management support provided to the CMS secretariat

25. **Umoja**, the Enterprise Resource Planning global solution implemented in 2015 facilitates efficient and transparent management of UN's financial, human, and physical resources as well as programme delivery. Since 2021, additional modules have been rolled out to enhance Umoja as a one-stop solution for all administrative and programmatic processes. These modules, collectively known as the Integrated Planning and Management Reporting (IPMR) tool, include, (a) budgeting tool, (b) programmatic view that incorporates Sustainable Development Goals and gender markers, (c) management tools that measure and record performance as well as highlight any existing funding gaps and (d) dashboards that present visualization tools of data for reporting purposes.
26. The CMS secretariat processes all administrative and programmatic transactions in Umoja, while UNEP provides support and training as required. So far, only projects funded from voluntary funding are processed in IPMR. A module for core funds is under development led by UN headquarters in New York.

27. As presented in the previous report of the Executive Director to the 52nd Meeting of the Standing Committee, the roll out of IPMR has led to an increase of Umoja license fees attributed to respective MEAs. The increase is partly due to the development costs as well as the cost allocation methodology which is based on the number of users. This increase in Umoja costs puts further burden on the already constrained share of programme support budget allocated to CMS. Therefore, Parties are requested to consider funding the Umoja license fee, now considered as a core cost, from the Convention's core funds.
28. **Delegation of Authority Policy Framework (DAPF)** – In 2019, the Secretary-General implemented a new delegation of authority policy framework as part of the management reforms. The objective of the new framework is to improve efficiency and flexibility of decision-making closer to the point of programme delivery. The reforms relate largely to administrative policies and procedures in the UN covering areas such as budget, property management, human resource, and other administrative matters. UNEP has implemented this revised DAPF for the management and administration of MEA secretariats. UNEP engaged with all MEA secretariats to improve understanding on scope and objectives of the revised framework and held consultations that allowed the revision of the delegation of authority from the UNEP Executive Director to the heads of all UNEP-administered MEAs. The new DAPF for MEA secretariats has been accepted by all Executive Heads.
29. **Programme Support Costs (PSC)** – In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/217 and UN procedures stipulated in the administrative instruction on Programme Support Accounts (ST/AI/286), PSC is 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 CMS secretariat are funded through two thirds of the programme support resources, which in recent years have been insufficient to meet expected obligations. The remaining one third is retained by UNEP to fund the provision of advisory and policy formulation core services in human resource, finance, procurement, legal and other administrative functional areas.
30. Following the adoption of UNEA resolution 2/18 in 2016, CMS and other MEAs could request the Executive Director of UNEP for a waiver of the 13 per cent charged against voluntary resources for travel of participants to meetings. However, under the new DAPF issued by the Secretary-General mentioned above, the authority to permit such waivers is vested with the Controller of the United Nations.
31. In a memo dated 10 June 2022 from the Controller on this subject, he noted that decreasing programme support resources could not sustain demands unless the established PSC rates of 13 per cent charged against voluntary contributions is applied consistently to all donors, including Member States. Any deviation would draw the attention of auditors and other compliance-monitoring bodies.
32. Following the guideline from the Controller, requests for PSC waiver against funding for travel of participants to meetings will not be approved. Instead, Secretariats have been advised to pursue fund-raising options and /or charge revert to unearmarked funds.
33. **Settlement of contributions** – The UN Secretariat adopted the International PublicSector 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. Those Parties that are in arrears are requested to engage with the CMS secretariat on settlement modalities.
34. At the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CMS held in Gandhinagar, India in 2020, Parties requested UNEP to provide alternative modalities that make it easier for parties to settle small, assessed amounts. UNEP continues to consult with UN headquarters for alternative modalities of effecting payments within the existing security arrangements as well as rules and regulations. UNEP is also considering solutions that would allow the use of debit or credit cards. The CMS secretariat will advise parties on the outcome of these initiatives once finalized.