

# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

**48<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**

*Bonn, Germany, 23 – 24 October 2018*

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**REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

**Standing Committee of the Convention on the  
Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals  
Forty-eighth meeting**  
Bonn, Germany, 23 and 24 October 2018  
STC48/Doc.7

## **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 by the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals at its forty-eighth meeting, to be held in Bonn, Germany, on 23 and 24 October 2018. It provides information on the secretariat services provided by UNEP and on the programmatic collaboration between UNEP and the secretariat in support of the Convention since the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Manila in October 2017.

### **II. Programmatic support provided to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals**

#### **A. Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme**

2. UNEP continues to strengthen its programmatic support for the work and implementation of the Convention and its agreements. The outcomes of the meetings of the governing bodies of UNEP and the Convention family of legal instruments provide an overarching framework for mutually beneficial cooperation. Regular consultations are taking place on programmatic cooperation for strategy and policy coherence.

3. 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 the period 2018–2019, in particular the subprogrammes on healthy and productive ecosystems, environmental governance, environment under review and chemicals and waste, adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly in its resolution 2/20.

4. The UNEP programme of work 2018–2019 and its project portfolios related to implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention, are the subject of consultations at joint and bilateral meetings of the focal points under the multilateral environmental agreement secretariats with responsibility for programmatic cooperation with the UNEP subprogramme coordinators, facilitated and organized by the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (Law Division) of UNEP. The joint consultation mechanism on programmes and projects ensures effective implementation of the relevant decisions of the governing bodies.

5. UNEP has started the process of developing the next UNEP programme of work for 2020–2021. In this process, UNEP is engaging with the relevant secretariats to ensure that any recent changes and emerging issues are considered during the development of that programme.

6. 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 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 and the resolutions and decisions of their governing bodies. The Law Division also facilitates policy dialogue among States on issues relating to international environmental law and governance, using the project on capacity-building related to multilateral environment agreements in African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, funded by the European Union. In addition, the Law Division serves as the secretariat to the African Elephant Fund, as described in section E below.

7. For effective implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change, climate law-making is essential. UNEP supports the review and reform of existing laws to enable countries to consider climate change proactively and to tackle climate risks by involving all stakeholders, as all sectors of the economy and society are at risk from climate change. With more evidence of migratory species conservation being subject to great risk from climate change and the impacts of land-use change, UNEP may collaborate with the secretariat on the implementation of CMS/Resolution 12.9 on the

Establishment of a Review Mechanism and a National Legislation, consistent with an institutional and legal framework on climate change and migratory species conservation and sustainable use.

8. In December 2017, the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly took place under the overarching theme “Towards a pollution-free planet”. The Environment Assembly, building on the implementation of the outcomes of its first and second sessions, adopted a ministerial declaration and a series of resolutions related to pollution and ecosystems that have an important impact on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species. The Ministerial Declaration and report of the session may be found at <https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/unea3>.

9. The Manila Declaration on Sustainable Development and Migratory Species, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its twelfth meeting, served as important input into the outcomes of the Environment Assembly at its third session, in particular on engaging indigenous and local communities and the private sector in pollution eradication efforts with a view to ensuring wildlife sustainability.

10. In line with the theme of the 2017 Environment Assembly session, UNEP has prepared a background report on the theme of working towards a pollution-free planet, which provides detailed evidence of the extent of the planet’s pollution, while also recommending potential action to remedy the problem. The report, which was also elaborated in cooperation with the Convention, has now been launched and may be downloaded at [http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21800/UNEA\\_towardspollution\\_long%20version\\_Web.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21800/UNEA_towardspollution_long%20version_Web.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

11. A joint effort to combat pollution and to build collaborative and integrated programmes may bring co-benefits for migratory species and their habitats. The resolutions of the Environment Assembly at its third session set out a framework of action against pollution. The parties to the Convention can benefit from strategies that consider mitigating pollution in an integrated manner and whilst reviewing the Convention’s Strategic Plan. This may be considered by the parties to the Convention as the foundation of UNEP programmatic cooperation and modalities of preparations for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

12. In all, the Environment Assembly adopted 11 resolutions, calling for accelerated action and strengthened partnerships on several issues with relation to pollution, which may be found at: <https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/unea3>. Resolutions that have linkages with the Convention’s Strategic Plan and the resolutions adopted by its Conference of the Parties are listed below, with their related Convention resolution, and summarized in the annex to the present report:

- (a) Resolution 3/7: Marine litter and microplastics (Convention resolution 12.20: Management of marine debris);
- (b) Resolution 3/9: Eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries (Convention resolution 11.15: Preventing poisoning of migratory birds);
- (c) Resolution 3/4: Environment and health (Convention resolution 11.15: Preventing poisoning of migratory birds);
- (d) Resolution 3/5: Investing in innovative environmental solutions for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (Convention resolutions 7.5: wind turbines and migratory species and 12.21: climate change and migratory species);
- (e) Resolution 3/8: Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally (Convention resolution 12.21: Climate change and migratory species);
- (f) Resolution 3/6: Managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development (Convention resolution 11.15: Preventing poisoning of migratory birds);
- (g) Resolution 3/2: Pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors (Convention resolutions 11.2: Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023, and 8.18: Integration of migratory species into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans);
- (h) Resolution 3/10: Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems (Convention resolution 12.07: The role of ecological networks in the conservation of migratory species);
- (i) Resolution 3/1: Pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism (Convention resolution 7.3: Oil pollution and migratory species).

## **B. Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

13. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement on climate change, and their linkage with the global environmental

goals embedded in the strategic plans of the multilateral environmental agreements and the decisions and resolutions of their governing bodies, represent a significant challenge for the international and national environmental community. UNEP, as a leading global environmental authority, is playing an increasingly active role of facilitator and supporter of the synergetic and integrated approaches of those agreements to meeting the relevant Sustainable Development Goals, including through resolutions of the Environment Assembly.

14. UNEP is responsible for methodology development and the reporting of data on relevant indicators at the national, regional and global levels as inputs for the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Although such objectives as Sustainable Development Goals 6, 13, 14 and 15, and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are at the very heart of its work, UNEP focuses on fostering ecosystem management with a view to delivering on all Sustainable Development Goals with an integrated approach. The following are examples of Sustainable Development Goal indicators relevant to the work of the Convention: 14.1.1 – Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density; 15.1.2 – Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type; and 15.7.1 – Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked.

15. UNEP is the custodian agency for 26 of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and, in 2016, it reported to the Secretary-General on six of those indicators, making it well placed to ensure that countries can track their progress. UNEP is setting the stage for broader support for the coherent implementation of the Goals and for linking their implementation to that of other global environmental goals, including those of the Convention on Migratory Species. Target 17.14 under Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) calls on all countries to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development and the agreed global indicator, 17.14.1, measures the number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development. UNEP has been mandated to develop a global methodology for this indicator and to report to the United Nations Statistics Division in its role as custodian agency.

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

16. UNEP is finalizing a report on the state of knowledge of crimes that have a serious impact on the environment and an analysis of legal frameworks for licit and illicit trade in wildlife and forest products. It has extended technical legal assistance and advisory legal services to countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific to strengthen their national legislation relating to wildlife, including provisions relating to the penalization of wildlife crimes. As Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Illicit Trade in Wildlife and Forest Products and in partnership with the Global Wildlife Program and the United States Agency for International Development, UNEP led the organization of the Africa-Asia Pacific Symposium on Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Combat Wildlife Crime, held in Bangkok, on 4 and 5 July 2017. The symposium advanced the common understanding on the key provisions needed for effective legal frameworks, presenting focused recommendations on the minimum elements that should be included and identifying capacity-building needs in the implementation of wildlife crime laws.

17. In 2018, in response to Assembly resolution 2/14 on the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, which called for an analysis of international best practices, with a view to involving local communities in wildlife management, UNEP launched its report entitled *Wild Life, Wild Livelihoods: Involving Communities in Sustainable Wildlife Management and Combating the Illegal Wildlife Trade*. The report was commissioned by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the International Institute for Environment and Development and proposed more concerted action and a stronger community voice on approaches to involving indigenous peoples and local communities in the fight against wildlife crime, including the illegal wildlife trade. The reports may be found at [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22864/WLWL\\_Report\\_web.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22864/WLWL_Report_web.pdf).

18. The report findings are consistent with the theme of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention: “Their future is our future – sustainable development for wildlife and people”. It summarizes insights from decades of research on community wildlife management and draws lessons from new analyses focused specifically on engaging indigenous peoples and local communities in combating the illegal trade in wildlife. The report also outlines eight action points designed to improve the community-based approach, ranging from better incentives and developing a better understanding of local customs and traditions, to involving local leaders in decision-making. Based on a recognition of the importance of the community voice in enabling sustainable and effective outcomes, it surveys the opportunities and constraints encountered by indigenous peoples and local communities in their participation in key international policy forums that influence wildlife management (specifically, the

Convention on Biological Diversity; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Convention on Migratory Species; the United Nations Environment Assembly; and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services).

## **D. Support for strengthening cooperation, coordination and synergies between the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and other biodiversity-related conventions**

### **1. Synergies and partnerships (Convention resolution 11.10)**

19. In November 2017, UNEP initiated its project on the theme: “Environmental treaties programme – realizing synergies for biodiversity”. This project was developed in close cooperation with the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species and the secretariats of other biodiversity-related conventions and is supported by the European Union and the Government of Switzerland. The project aims to support efforts to strengthen synergies in the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions at both the international and national levels. It is intended to produce a number of outputs, namely: contribution to informing the informal advisory group on synergies established by decision XIII/24 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity; support for the preparations for a post-2020 global biodiversity framework; provision of input to a long-term post-2020 strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020, being led by the Convention on Biological Diversity in line with its decision XIII/23 in cooperation with IUCN; cooperation with public information officers of the secretariats of biodiversity-related conventions; preparation of materials related to synergies, including contributions to the Convention on Biological Diversity road map for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the international level 2017–2020, as set out in decision XIII/24, annex II; development of a data and reporting tool aimed at supporting the experts and focal points in preparing national reports to the biodiversity-related conventions; and facilitation of national-level work to support countries in realizing synergies at the national level.

20. Within the same project, UNEP, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UNEP World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (WCMC) have been carrying out several of the actions described in the road map for enhancing synergies established by decision XIII/24 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, with financial support from the Governments of Finland and Switzerland and from the European Union. These include the development of three compendia of guidance with the support of several organizations and individuals on, first, synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions; second, capturing, managing and using data and information for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; and, third, key global databases related to the biodiversity-related conventions. The comprehensive consultations included all biodiversity-related conventions and, among other outcomes, feedback was received by the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species. As a next step, it is intended to transform the compendia of guidance into living documents and therefore to update them when additional material becomes available and to turn the information into a searchable database online (potentially on a joint convention website on synergies).

### **2. National reports (Convention resolution 12.05)**

21. UNEP-WCMC, in partnership with the Convention secretariat, is developing a proposal for the revision of the Convention’s national report format, to be submitted to the Convention’s Standing Committee at its forty-eighth meeting, for consideration by parties. The revised format will improve the ability of the national reports to provide information on the implementation of the Convention and to assess progress towards attainment of the targets in the Convention’s Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015–2023. This process also aims to shorten and simplify the format to reduce the reporting burden for parties.

22. Improvements have continued to be made to the online reporting system used by the Convention family, including improvements to the user experience (including speed and stability of the system, and a redesign of the user interface and workflow); the creation of a user support centre; making the system codebase open-source; and development of an application programming interface to make information collected via the online reporting system more easily and readily available. The system divides the Convention family into four separate entities (the Convention itself; the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds; the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas; and the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats). Further improvements have been made as more multilateral environmental agreements continue to sign up to the online reporting system, including a new administrative functionality to edit and answer questionnaires on behalf of respondents, an improved forgotten password functionality, and additional refinements to the delegation work-flow.

### 3. Taxonomy and nomenclature (Convention resolution 12.27)

23. Relevant changes to the Convention's Appendix listings adopted by its Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting were incorporated into its centralized portal for access to key information on species of global concern, known as Species+ (available at <https://www.speciesplus.net/>), including 34 new species and subspecies (covering 16 avian, 6 aquatic and 12 terrestrial taxa) added to Species+.

### 4. Southern hemisphere albatross conservation (Convention resolution 12.11)

24. UNEP-WCMC is working with the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands to propose a network of terrestrial protected areas that meet a series of defined conservation goals. Central to these goals is the continued protection of species listed under the Agreement for Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, of which there are seven on South Georgia.

### 5. Programme on minimizing the illegal killing of endangered species

25. One of the most significant marks of progress in this area is the development and adoption of the joint initiative on African carnivores by CITES and the Convention on Migratory Species. Several resolutions and decisions have been adopted by the conferences of parties of the two instruments relating to four iconic African carnivores, namely, the African lion (*Panthera leo*), the cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), the leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and the wild dog (*Lycaon pectus*), and through this initiative, the secretariats of the Convention on Migratory Species and CITES bring coherence and efficiency to the implementation of these resolutions and decisions. The initiative is being implemented in close cooperation with IUCN and UNEP.

## E. African Elephant Fund

26. 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 CITES and the secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, which are working together to curtail the growing threats to elephant populations. To date, the Fund has implemented 39 projects in the African elephant range States. During the tenth meeting of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee, held in Kasane, Botswana, from 1 to 3 March 2018, the Steering Committee approved 17 projects to be implemented across the African continent.

27. 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, as set out in Convention resolution 12.19. The Convention secretariat was further directed to cooperate with the CITES secretariat and UNEP to promote fund-raising for the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan as part of overall fund-raising initiatives and to explore opportunities for partnerships with current projects and programmes of CITES and UNEP to support the African elephant range States in the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan. The Convention secretariat participated in both the ninth and tenth meetings of the Action Plan as an observer. During the tenth meeting, the Convention secretariat was elected as ex-officio member, joining UNEP and the CITES secretariat, which are also ex-officio members.

28. The African Elephant Action Plan was adopted by African elephant range States in March 2010 on the sidelines of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. By its resolution 16.9, CITES invited other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, and 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. Activity B13 of the joint work programme of CITES and the Convention on Migratory Species for the period 2015–2020 requires the CITES and Convention on Migratory Species secretariats to ensure connectivity with 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.

29. The African Elephant Fund Steering Committee works in close collaboration with the programme on the monitoring of illegal killing of elephants, known as the MIKE Programme, run by the CITES secretariat and hosted by UNEP to monitor trends in the illegal killing of elephants, build management capacity and provide information to help range States make appropriate management and enforcement decisions. The secretariat of the MIKE Programme is an ex officio member of the Steering Committee and, upon request, it assists range States in the development of the proposals to be submitted for its consideration. This ensures alignment with activities supported in range States by the MIKE Programme and those funded through the African Elephant Fund.

## **F. United Nations information portal on multilateral environmental agreements**

30. The United Nations information portal on multilateral environmental agreements (InforMEA) has some 20 global multilateral environmental agreements among its members, is facilitated by UNEP and co-chaired by the Secretary General of CITES. The idea behind the portal is to assist parties in implementing their obligations under the various conventions through interoperable information systems based on standards, interoperability and open-source technology.

31. The Convention has contributed to and successfully harnessed the opportunities provided by the InforMEA initiative. It is now at the forefront of the provision of information relating to multilateral environmental agreements. Content relating to the Convention on Migratory Species may be consulted via the biodiversity section of InforMEA and on the InforMEA learning tool. The free InforMEA e-learning platform caters to over 15,000 learners from 190 countries, who have received over 5,000 certificates of completion.

32. Most recently, the Secretariat was supported in the context of testing semi-auto indexing and enhancing its related thesaurus.

33. In the next phase, InforMEA will be enhanced to highlight and help in communicating the collective contribution by the multilateral environmental agreements towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The learning section will be enhanced and cooperation with academic institutions around the world intensified. The Convention contributes to the enhancement of the InforMEA section on internationally agreed goals. The Convention secretariat is also providing strong support for the design of the data reporting tool, which will give officials of countries submitting reports to biodiversity-related conventions access to a joint collaborative working space to store and manage documentation in the preparation of their requisite national reports.

34. 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.

35. The Convention secretariat also actively participates in the initiative's work and its Executive Secretary chaired the 2018 Annual Steering Committee meeting on behalf of the co-chair. The meeting, which took place in Montreux, Switzerland, from 5 to 8 June 2018, considered further partnerships and outreach possibilities with global and regional networks, including sharing a common knowledge base with global judicial networks and supporting capacity-building opportunities in the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of States, including through the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans online forum.

36. New members and observers were welcomed to the InforMEA Initiative. These included the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (as host of the Convention on the Law of the Sea), along with the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in the Latin America and the Caribbean region (Escazú Agreement), the International Monetary Fund, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Global Judicial Institute on the Environment which joined as observers.

## **G. Marine plastic debris and microplastics**

37. As part of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, for which the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities provides secretariat services, the Clean Seas campaign on marine litter was joined by 50 countries, which undertook a range of commitments. Further details on the campaign are available at [www.cleans seas.org](http://www.cleans seas.org).

38. In its resolution 2.11, on marine plastic litter and microplastics, the Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director to assess the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and subregional governance strategies and approaches. The resulting assessment was submitted to the Environment Assembly at its third session in December 2017, at which a third resolution on marine litter was adopted. The secretariat of the Convention was one of the contributors to that study.

39. The study revealed that that 8,300 million tons of virgin plastics have been produced to date, and that, as of 2015, 6,300 tons of plastic waste had been generated. Of this waste, 9 per cent has been recycled, 12 per cent incinerated and 79 per cent has accumulated in landfills or the natural environment. Under current production and waste management trends, 12,000 tons of plastic waste will be in landfills or in the natural environment by 2050. Plastic litter and microplastics are a source of macroplastics, microplastics and nanoplastics in marine environments that contribute significantly to marine and coastal pollution. In some organisms, microplastics may transfer from the guts of organisms and invade their cells and tissues. Research has indicated that synthetic microfibres are also present in the atmosphere, providing a pathway for contamination by microplastics through atmospheric fallout. Long-term solutions include improved governance at all levels, along with behavioural and system changes, such as a more circular economy and more sustainable production and consumption patterns.

40. The most urgent short-term solution to reducing plastic inputs, in particular in developing economies, is improving waste collection and management. This source of long-lasting and transboundary plastic pollution is not addressed under any international legally binding instrument. There are global instruments to protect biodiversity, manage hazardous chemicals and waste, and prevent pollution of the marine environment from ocean sources and, to a lesser degree, land-based sources of pollution. Some applicable measures are weakly distributed among these global instruments, but the reduction of marine plastic litter and microplastics is not a primary objective of any one of them.

41. The first meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter was held in Nairobi, from 29 to 31 May 2018. Experts from all over the world met to discuss barriers and options for combating marine plastic litter and microplastics. The meeting was mandated by the third stand-alone resolution on marine litter adopted by the Environment Assembly in December 2017.

## **H. Participation of UNEP in the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species**

42. The twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, held in Manila in October 2017, closed with outcomes that exceeded all expectations. It was preceded by a high-level and thought-provoking leaders' dialogue, which contributed to the discussions of the agenda item on the Environment Assembly theme of a pollution-free planet.

### **1. Leaders' breakfast meeting: Moving towards a pollution-free planet**

43. The leaders' breakfast meeting was held on 22 October 2017 on the sidelines of the twelfth meeting, bringing together policymakers and leaders from the private sector and regional and global treaties. The meeting, which was organized by UNEP in close collaboration with the host country and the Convention secretariat, focused on the issue of cooperation between Governments and the private sector to tackle the most pervasive forms of pollution, concentrating on marine debris and on pesticide and lead ammunition pollution, and looking also at their impact on migratory species. It addressed the overarching question: "How can policymakers and the private sector work together to make choices and transform business models so that the sustainability of the planet's natural resources is not compromised?"

### **2. High-level panel**

44. UNEP high-level representatives participated in well-orchestrated high-level panel discussions led by the host Government to discuss the links between sustainable development goals and conservation of migratory species, the outcomes of which fed into the Manila Declaration on Sustainable Development and Migratory Species adopted by the Conference. In turn, the Manila Declaration contributed to the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration at the third session of the Environment Assembly.

### **3. Side events organized by UNEP**

#### **(a) African Elephant Fund: Safeguarding Africa's elephants for future generations**

45. At the side event, which was presented by UNEP and the secretariat of the African Elephant Fund, UNEP highlighted continuing activities under range State projects funded by the African Elephant Fund in implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan; lessons learned in the course of implementation; and ways of strengthening collaboration between Convention parties and African elephant range States in the management of cross-border elephant populations. The Executive Secretary of the Convention welcomed the growing collaboration between African elephant range States in the conservation of migratory elephants on the continent, including the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*) signed in 2005. The Chair of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee launched the new joint publication of the Fund and UNEP, entitled "African Elephant Fund: Transforming Strategies into Action".

#### **(b) Environmental change through capacity-building under the multilateral environmental agreements in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries**

46. This event, which was led by UNEP as the global coordinator of the capacity-building programme under the multilateral environmental agreements in the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, known as the ACP MEAs Programme. The ACP MEAs Programme has led institutional, national, and synergistic capacity-building efforts across the 79 countries in the three regions, focusing on an endogenous approach to the undertaking. The panellists provided insights from the standpoint of their national focal points on managing the multilateral environmental agreements and the need for capacity-building support, in particular with regard to the efficient and synergistic delivery of



biodiversity agreements (in the context of their own country); this side event brought together key multilateral environmental agreement hubs to discuss initiatives and ideas to promote implementation of the second phase of the ACP MEAs programme.

(c) **Changing the approach to great ape conservation in a changing world**

47. The Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) organized a side event on the topic “Changing the way we do great ape conservation in a changing world”. The panel included the Executive Director of UNEP, Erik Solheim, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species, Bradnee Chambers, and delegates from the Governments of France, Germany, Luxembourg and Nigeria, and from UNEP-WCMC.

48. Donor countries confirmed their continued support for GRASP and made significant pledges. Germany undertook to support transboundary collaboration for the conservation of the critically endangered Cross River gorilla, with a pledge of \$200,000, and for the conflict-sensitive conservation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo for the critically endangered Eastern Lowland gorilla, with a pledge of \$115,000. The Government of Luxembourg announced support for the project on climate-resilient mountain ecosystems for resilient livelihoods and mountain flagship species: promoting climate-smart conservation as part of a wider ecosystem-based adaptation approach – the mountain gorilla component will be implemented by GRASP at a total project cost of 9 million euros.

49. Governments from across the world attending the largest wildlife summit held in 2018 collectively endorsed actions on the conservation of a wide range of migratory species, many of which are close to extinction.

### III. Administrative and financial management support

50. UNEP is continuing to work towards improving the effectiveness of administrative arrangements with the multilateral environmental agreements. With the finalization and distribution, in March 2018, of the suite of secretariat services provided to multilateral environmental agreements, UNEP has now fully implemented resolution 2/18 on the relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats, adopted by the Environment Assembly at its second session in May 2016.

51. The United Nations Secretariat is now working towards the deployment of new modules to enhance its enterprise resource management system, Umoja, which was launched in June 2015. With the deployment of new modules, strategic planning, programme and project management, resource mobilization and implementing partners’ management will be standardized and integrated within the same system. UNEP has begun efforts engage the Convention secretariat in achieving a successful deployment of the extension of the system and will continue to pursue those efforts.

52. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/217 and the United Nations procedures stipulated in administrative issuance ST/AI/286, programme support costs at a standard rate of 13 per cent are charged to all extrabudgetary resources<sup>1</sup> to recover the incremental costs incurred when supporting activities financed through such resources. The amount of programme support resources available in any given year is based on the income generated for that purpose in the previous year. In line with the UNEP procedures on management of programme support resources, an agreed portion of the income generated by the multilateral environmental agreements is retroceded to it and the balance contributes to the pool that funds central administrative functions and any unforeseen financial liability. UNEP maintains a close check on its programme support resources, which in the last few years have witnessed a reduction in the fund balance owing, among other factors, to an increase in requests from donors to waive the standard rate and a reduction in voluntary contributions. To attend to this, the Executive Director has issued a memorandum to heads of offices to reconsider their requests for waivers, review their cost structures and closely monitor consumption of their programme resources.

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

<sup>1</sup> For UNEP, the term “extrabudgetary resources” refers to trust funds as distinct from core budgetary resources, namely the Environment Fund.

## Linkages between resolutions of the Environment Assembly and resolutions of the Convention on Migratory Species

1. The substance of the resolutions of the Environment Assembly that have linkages with resolutions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species at its twelfth meeting is indicated below:
2. Resolution 3/1 on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism: the resolution targets environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem services caused by pollution that is inflicted by armed conflicts, such as oil spills, in countries suffering from this problem. Armed conflicts hamper sustainable development, and the resolution has linkages with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which promotes peace, justice and strong institutions for all (linked with Convention resolution 7.3 on oil pollution and migratory species)
3. Resolution 3/2 on pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors: this resolution addresses soil, air and water pollution impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems and the co-benefits of integrating productive and polluting sectors such as agriculture, aquaculture, extractives, energy and tourism into evidence-based policy planning and decision making (linked with Convention resolutions 11.2 on the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species and 8.18 on the integration of migratory species into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans).
4. Resolution 3/4 on environment and health: paragraph 5 of this resolution stresses the health benefits of addressing global environmental challenges such as air, marine, water and soil pollution, chemicals exposure, waste management, climate change and biodiversity loss, and their interrelations, and the importance of cross-cutting and preventive approaches, including gender mainstreaming, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches, into health and well-being, at all stages (linked with Convention resolution 11.15 on preventing the poisoning of migratory birds).
5. Resolution 3/5 on investing in innovative environmental solutions for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: this resolution urges Member States supported by international organizations to adopt, as appropriate, innovative environmental solutions, financial mechanisms and partnerships for sustainable industrialization, agriculture, sound urban development, transport, tourism and trade and sustainable production and consumption in those sectors, thus preventing, reducing and reversing ecosystem degradation and loss and developing policies and partnerships with the private sector to that end (linked with Convention resolutions 7.5 on wind turbines and migratory species and 12.21 on climate change and migratory species).
6. Resolution 3/6 on managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development: the resolution acknowledges that land is the main resource base around which ecosystem services are anchored and that soil is one of the largest reservoirs of biodiversity and that the negative impacts of the contamination of soil undermine the productivity and sustainability of ecosystems, biodiversity, agriculture and food security and clean ground and surface water, potentially affecting water birds and hampering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goals 1, 2, 3, 6, 12, 13 and 15. Marine birds are useful as bioindicators of environmental pollution in estuarine and marine environments because they are often at the top of the food chain, where they bioaccumulate contaminants with age. Lead poisoning is one of the most insidious threats to birds of prey, waterfowl and game birds, and it takes very little contamination to lead to their illness, debilitation or death.
7. The resolution urges UNEP and other United Nations entities to support government efforts to strengthen and coordinate national and regional policies and legislation to curb soil pollution; and invites the international community to support the development of information systems of polluted sites and programmes that invest in the sustainable land management and research aimed at preventing, reducing and managing soil pollution, and to facilitate sustainable resource mobilization from all sources. The resolution also requests UNEP, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and relevant global and regional initiatives with expertise related to soil and soil pollution, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Global Soil Partnership, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the World Health Organization, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the International Committee

on Contaminated Land to cooperate as appropriate on efforts geared at preventing, reducing and managing soil pollution (linked with Convention resolution 11.15 on preventing the poisoning of migratory birds).

8. Resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics: the resolution notes with concern the high and rapidly increasing levels of marine plastic litter and the expected increase in negative effects of land-based activities on marine biodiversity, ecosystems, animal well-being, in particular that of migratory water birds, fisheries, maritime transport, recreation and tourism, local societies and economies, and the urgent need to step up actions by 2025 and to strengthen knowledge on the levels and effects of microplastics and nanoplastics on marine ecosystems, seafood and human health; it encourages all Member States to develop national action plans to prevent marine litter by integrating their waste management and recycling legislation and prioritizing clean-up in the marine environment in areas where marine litter poses a threat to biodiversity (linked with Convention resolution 12.20 on the management of marine debris).

9. Resolution 3/8 on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally: the resolution points out that humans are not alone in suffering the effects of poor air quality and chemical-laced food and water. The animals of our planet are in crisis as well, in particular birds. Air pollution impacts on avian species include respiratory distress and illness, increased detoxification effort, elevated stress levels, immunosuppression, behavioural changes and impaired reproductive success. Addressing air pollution results in multiple benefits – to human health, the economy, ecosystems and climate, and efforts across sectors are needed to improve air quality (linked with Convention resolution 12.21 on climate change and migratory species).

10. Resolution 3/9 on eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting the environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries: the resolution notes that wild fowls can die from the ingestion of one lead shot, bullet fragment, or sinker. According to a recent study on loon mortality, nearly half of adult loons found sick or dead during the breeding season in New England were diagnosed with confirmed or suspected lead poisoning from ingestion of lead fishing weights. The resolution opens up an opportunity for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds to participate in the global post-2020 chemicals agenda under negotiation (the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management) and to harness synergies with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (linked with Convention resolution 11.15 on preventing the poisoning of migratory birds).

11. Resolution 3/10 on addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems: the resolution stresses that water pollution is a global and exacerbating problem which touches everyone and everything. The resolution builds on previous Environment Assembly resolutions related to access to clean water and has direct impacts on the Convention on Migratory Species and its family of instruments. The health and sustainability of migratory species depend on sufficient and adequate water quality. Their life cycles, migratory paths, breeding and feeding habits are changing as water quality and quantity in nature change and waste water grows more abundant, and are negatively affected by water pollutants from chemical and biological sources caused by development and economic growth. The resolution includes guidance on engagement with water partners seeking solutions to mitigate water pollution at all levels, such as UNEP and the Global Environment Monitoring System Water Programme (GEMS-Water), custodian to the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal indicators 6.3.2 (ambient water quality) and 6.6.1 (extent of freshwater ecosystems), and also on collaboration with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and, lastly, with the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (linked with Convention resolution 12.07 on the role of ecological networks in the conservation of migratory species).