

Synthesis Report

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND
AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE
CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS AND
MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS**



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Facilitated by

The Sustainable Hunting Project (“*Building Capacity for Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in Mediterranean Third Countries*”) with financial support from the European Union’s LIFE Third Countries financial instrument (LIFE 04 TCY/INT/000054)

Project partners



Together for birds and people



جمعية أحباء الطيور
Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux"



1 Project Background

BirdLife International, in partnership with Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" (AAO Tunisia), Society for Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) in Lebanon and African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Secretariat, with financial support from the European Union's LIFE Third Countries fund, Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Global Environment Fund (GEF) has launched a 3-year initiative to tackle migratory birds hunting issues in the so called Mediterranean Third Countries (MTCs), 8 countries in North Africa and in the Middle East region. The countries involved in this project are: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. The overall project goal is to **improve the conservation status of migratory birds within key countries along the Western Palaearctic flyway (Europe, Middle East and Africa)**", whereas the specific purpose is to: *"strengthen the management of bird hunting in selected North African and Middle East countries of the Mediterranean region to reduce excessive, indiscriminate and illegal hunting of migratory birds, promote more sustainable hunting practices and enhance the compliance with international and regional agreements on the conservation of migratory birds"*.

2 Project Area and Focus

The Project operates through a series of regional initiatives and model collaborative activities involving government, hunting and conservation groups. Tunisia and Lebanon are focal or "hub" countries in North Africa and in the Middle East respectively for demonstration of activities aimed at achieving sustainable hunting which can be replicated in the other project countries. Even though the scale of impact is different between both countries, hunting of migrants is of socio-economic importance to both of them and also raises management and conservation issues (e.g. illegal or unregulated hunting). Both countries also have "bottlenecks" and wintering sites of crucial conservation importance for migratory birds, as well as good stakeholder collaboration on hunting issues.

3 Methodology

The synthesis report is based mainly on desk top research. A questionnaire was developed to collect information from the government authorities within MTCs of relevance to the subject matter, with the purpose to identify the following:

- Membership of MTCs to key international agreements relevant to the conservation of migratory birds and bird hunting, including the CBD, CMS, AEWA, Ramsar and CITES (date of signature, ratification and entry into force)

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCs**

- Knowledge of the obligations towards the above mentioned agreements and conventions relevant to the conservation of migratory birds and management of bird hunting in the MTCs.
- How do MTCs fulfill their obligations towards the above mentioned agreements and conventions?
- National Authorities responsible for implementation of the above mentioned agreements and conventions within the MTCs, whether it is government or civil society (NGOs).

Four countries: Morocco, Lebanon, Syria and Algeria responded to the questionnaire.

4 Key Relevant International Agreements & Conventions

A number of international treaties, conventions and national laws (conservation, environmental or agricultural) have been enacted in order to provide protection for migratory birds within the MTCs.

International treaties and conventions include:

CMS (Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals; also known as Bonn Convention) aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an intergovernmental treaty concluded under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program and concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale. Since the Convention's entry into force in 1983, its membership has grown steadily to include 101 (as of 1st of January 2007) parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. Migratory species threatened with extinction are listed on **Appendix I** of the Convention. CMS Parties strive towards strictly protecting these animals, conserving or restoring the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them. Besides establishing obligations for each State joining the Convention, CMS promotes concerted action among the range States of many of these species.

Migratory species can be added on Appendix I if a Party considers that they are endangered, and submits a proposal, which meets the requirements of Resolution 1.5 (Bonn, 1985). Upon the recommendation of the Scientific Council, the Conference of the Parties (COP) would then decide on the adoption the proposal in accordance with Art. XI of the convention..

Migratory species can be removed from Appendix I when the Conference of the Parties (COP) determines that there is reliable evidence, including the best scientific evidence available, that the species is no longer endangered and that it is not likely to become endangered again.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCs

Migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international co-operation are listed in **Appendix II** of the CMS. For this reason, the Convention encourages the range States to conclude global or regional agreements.

Several agreements have been concluded to date under the auspices of CMS, one of which aims at the protection of the African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds (**AEWA**). Countries may participate in CMS Agreements/MoUs whilst they are not a Party to CMS such as Lebanon (June 2002).

AEWA (African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement) is the largest agreement developed so far under CMS auspices. AEWA focuses on migratory waterbirds. It was concluded on 16 June 1995 in the Hague, the Netherlands, and entered into force on 1 November 1999.

AEWA adopts a unique "flyway approach" in the conservation of waterbirds. Being a regional agreement, AEWA focuses on 23 families, 235 species and 517 populations of waterbirds ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle including many species of pelicans, storks, flamingos, ducks, waders, terns, gulls and geese.

The AEWA Agreement area covers 119 range States in Africa, Europe, including parts of Canada (north eastern tip), Greenland, Central Asia and the Middle East. The geographic area stretches from the northern reaches of Canada and the Russian Federation to the southernmost tip of Africa. The agreement calls for coordinated action by the range States during the migration period of waterbirds and includes recommendations regarding the use of lead shots, hunting of waterbirds, conservation of key sites and species-specific action plans. It is worth noting that of the 119 range States only 59 countries, as of January 1st 2007 have become Contracting Party to AEWA¹. With the exception of Morocco, the MTC involved in this project are all Party to AEWA.

CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) signed by 150 government leaders at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The CBD is dedicated to promoting sustainable development and conceived as a practical tool for translating the principles of Agenda 21 into reality. The Convention establishes three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between Governments, drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. It accords varying degrees of protection to more than 33,000 species of animals and plants and establishes a system of import/export regulations to prevent the over-exploitation of plants and animals listed in three appendices to the Convention. Different levels of trade regulations are provided

¹ <http://www.unep-aewa.org>

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS

depending on the status of the listed species and the contribution that trade makes to decline of the species. Procedures are provided for periodic amendments to the appendices. CITES was signed by 80 nations in Washington, D.C., on March 3, 1973.

Ramsar Convention² was adopted in Ramsar, Iran, on February 3, 1971, and opened for signature at UNESCO headquarters on July 12, 1972. On December 21, 1975, the Convention entered into force after the required signatures of seven countries.

The Convention maintains a list of wetlands of international importance and works to encourage the wise use of all wetlands in order to preserve the ecological characteristics from which wetland values derive. As of 23 April 2007, the number of Contracting Parties is 154, number of sites designated for the List of Wetlands of International importance is 1669 and total surface area of designated sites: 151,071,270 hectares.

Bern Convention, or the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, was adopted on September 1979 in Bern, Switzerland, and came into force on 1st of June 1982 in the European Union. The aims of the Bern Convention are *"to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, especially those species and habitats whose conservation requires the co-operation of several States, and to promote such co-operation"*. Particular emphasis is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species. Although this Convention is specific to Europe, Tunisia and Morocco are formal observers to this Convention.

Barcelona Convention of 1976, amended in 1995, and the Protocols drawn up in line with this Convention aim to reduce pollution in the Mediterranean Sea and protect and improve the marine environment in the area, thereby contributing to its sustainable development. The European Council Decision N° 84/132/EEC of 1 March 1984 on the conclusion of the Protocol concerning Mediterranean specially protected areas is of great relevance to hunting and conservation of migratory birds.

African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources is a regional convention that requires the Contracting States to undertake and adopt the measures necessary to ensure conservation, utilization and development of soil, water, flora and faunal in accordance with scientific principles and with due regard to the best interests of the people. There are specific references to hunting in the convention under articles related to strict nature reserves, national parks, faunal resources and protected species. It mandates control of hunting, capture and fishing and prohibits the use of poisons, explosives and automatic weapons in hunting.

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitats; I.L.M. 11:963-² 976; September 1972

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCs

5 International conventions and agreements relevant to the conservation of migratory birds and management of birds hunting in the MTCs

Convention / Initiative	Country Status							
	Lebanon	Palestine	Syria	Jordan	Egypt	Tunisia	Algeria	Morocco
CBD	Signed in 12/06/1992 and ratified in 11/8/1994 Entry into force 1994	No Information Available	Signed in 03/05/1993 and ratified in 04/01/1996	Signed in 11/06/1992 and ratified in 12/11/1993	Signed in 09/06/1992 and ratified in 02/06/1994	Signed in 13/06/1992 and ratified in 15/07/1993	Signed in 13/06/1992 and ratified in 14/08/1995	Signed in 13/06/1992 and ratified in 21/08/1995
CMS	Not a Party		Date of entry into force 01/06/2003. Party of AEWA and ACCO.	Date of entry into force 01/03/2001. Party of AEWA.	Date of entry into force 01/11/1983. Party of AEWA and Signatory of CURL.	Date of entry into force 01/06/1987. Party of AEWA and ACCO. Signatory of CURL	Date of entry into force 01/11/2005.	Date of entry into force 01/11/1993. Party of ACCO, Ratify of AEWA, Signatory of CURL and MT-IOSEA
CITES	Not a Party		Date of accession 30/04/2003. Date of entry into force 29/07/2003	Date of accession 14/12/1978. Date of entry into force 14/03/1979	Date of accession 04/01/1978. Date of entry into force 04/04/1978	Date of ratification 10/07/1974. Date of entry into force 01/07/1975	Date of accession 23/11/1983. Date of entry into force 21/02/1984	Date of ratification 16/10/1975. Date of entry into force 14/01/1976

Synthesis Report

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS

Convention / Initiative	Country Status							
	Lebanon	Palestine	Syria	Jordan	Egypt	Tunisia	Algeria	Morocco
AEWA	Date of entry into force 13-6-2002 by law 360		Date of entry into force 01-08-2003	Date of entry into force 01/11/1999	Date of entry into force 01-11-1999	Date of entry into force 01-10-2005	Contracting Party	Signatory to
Ramsar	4 Ramsar sites, 4,016 hectares. Ratified on 1/3/1999 by law Entry into force 1999		1 Ramsar site, 10,000 hectares	1 Ramsar site, 7,372 hectares	2 Ramsar sites, 105,700 hectares	1 Ramsar site, 12,600 hectares	42 Ramsar sites, 2,959,615 hectares	24 Ramsar sites, 272,010 hectares
Barcelona Convention	Protocol for Specially protected areas under Barcelona Convention: Entry into force 22/02/1994		Entry into force 12/02/78	Not a Party	Signed 16/02/1975 Ratified 24/08/1978 Entry into force 23/09/78	Ratified 25/05/1977	Ratified 02/01/1981	Signatory to
Bern Convention	Not a Party		Not a Party	Not a Party	Not a Party	Ratified 14/06/1990 R Entry into force 1/10/1990	Not a Party	Ratified 24/04/2001 Entry into force 1/8/2001
African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	Not a Party		Not a Party	Not a Party	Ratified 04/11/1976	Signed & entry into force 16/06/1968	Signed & entry into force 16/06/1968	Signed & entry into force 16/06/1968

6 Obligations & Compliance of MTCs towards these agreements and conventions

MTCs satisfy the obligations towards international treaties and conventions through the implementation of various projects and programs, in addition to the inclusion of these obligations in their national environmental policies, strategies, and enacting national laws.

Arab Republic of Egypt

Egypt has signed over ten international and regional conventions concerning the preservation of nature; nearly all of which have provisions for the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife resources, including migratory birds. According to Article Number 151 of the Egyptian Constitution, any international convention to which Egypt is a party, becomes a law of the land and takes precedence over Egyptian law.

With regards to hunting, instructions have been issued to regulate hunting by defining types of birds allowed to be hunting and the quantity to be hunted, hunting sites, hunting season and the issuance of hunting permits.

The main international and regional conventions which Egypt has signed, obligating member States to conserve migratory bird species and regulate their harvesting are:

- African Convention on Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1968)
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (RAMSAR) (1971)
- Barcelona Convention (1976)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (1973)
- Red Sea Agreement (1982)
- Specially Protected Area and Biodiversity of the Mediterranean
- Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) (1983)
- Convention on Biological diversity (CBD) (1992)
- Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird (AEWA) (1995)

The Nature Conservation Sector is the focal point for all conventions related to biodiversity, except for CITES which is in joint supervision with the Ministry of Agriculture.

While Egypt regularly attends meetings of the contracting parties and submits reports, except in the case of CITES, Egypt has yet to take the necessary actions to materialize the

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS

provisions of the conventions on national basis as mandated by the agreements. A national program for hunting management was included in an earlier version of the National Biodiversity Strategy to the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity), which was later changed and not included in the strategy that appears on the CBD.

As for the status of three of the most important conventions for the conservation of migratory birds:

CITES

Steps have been taken in recent years to establish a legal, organizational and operation framework for CITES management in Egypt. A system was established for issuing CITES permits and monitoring wildlife imports and exports at the airports and ports. While there has been enhanced regulation of CITES, including confiscations of falcons, the country has been lax in convention compliance which has led to repeated violations. There has been continued trade in species and products listed under Appendix I of the convention and excessive trade in animals listed under Appendix II. Migratory birds have been found smuggled from Egypt or exported with forged documents. A number of species listed under CITES are either not or only partially legally protected in Egypt. There is a need to enhance the monitoring and regulation of CITES in Egypt and to assess Egypt's capacity and political will to undertake such action.

CMS and AEWA

Egypt northern lakes and the Nile River constitute 25% of the total wetlands in the Mediterranean region. In addition, the Red Sea Mountains and Sinai have international importance to migratory birds. However, there is little progress in the follow-up on the provisions of CMS and AEWA in Egypt. A number of species listed under Appendix I and II of the agreements are not protected under Egyptian law. All the actions taken to meet the agreement's requirements are on an incidental basis. The lack of compliance is due to the fact that the government is overloaded, and its limited resources and manpower strained trying to meet all the needs and demands in the field of nature conservation.

Jordan

Jordan is a Party to a number of international conventions and agreements as illustrated above. The implementation of these conventions and agreements are included in the Jordanian national environmental strategies and action plans. In addition, the Agriculture Law No. 44 of 2002 is the main reference for wildlife hunting in the country.

An ongoing project of relevance to the subject matter is the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) which is a GEF initiative that aims to assess the capacity constraints and potentials for implementing the three UNDP international environmental conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS

Lebanon

Lebanon has initiated many activities and implemented many projects in order to fulfill its obligations towards the CBD and the other agreements and conventions mentioned in section 5 Table 1.

Lebanon has issued many laws for the conservation of species and their habitats, among which are the following regulations that cover directly or indirectly the conservation of birds' species:

- The Law for the Protection of the Environment (Law 444, dated 8/8/2002) put the general framework for the protection of the environment in Lebanon. Articles 47-48 call for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, the establishment of nature reserves and for regulating access to genetic resources.
- An amended hunting law, modifying and updating the hunting law of 1952 (law no 580, dated 25/2/2004). The new hunting law regulates hunting practices, calls for defining an annual hunting season and period within the season and for defining prey, birds and animals as wild, resident or migratory which are considered protected all year long, and states that threatened and rare species must be defined and prohibited for hunting.

In order to fulfill the objectives of the CBD, Lebanon has executed many operational projects related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Lebanon, some of which are on regional level. Of particular note is:

- National Capacity Self Assessment Project/ NCSA (MoE/GEF/UNDP)

AEWA:

Lebanon has moved forward in the implementation of the Action Plan of the AEWA agreement, by undertaking measures to respond to the defined actions. In order to achieve this, the responsible agency, the Ministry of Environment, has chosen to establish partnerships with specialized organizations in an effort to harness national capacities for the fulfillment of its obligations. Examples are the NGO Twinning project led by SPNL in Lebanon, where strong partnership between EU-based mentoring NGO (MedWet) and non-EU Mediterranean NGOs (SPNL & RSCN) is established for capacity building and transfer of expertise on best practices of conserving nature.

In addition, the Soaring Bird regional project involving 11 countries along the flyway between Africa and Europe, to be implemented in Lebanon by SPNL in collaboration with UNDP, MoE and the relevant ministry sectors will contribute to AEWA.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS

Ramsar:

Within Mediterranean initiative under Ramsar convention, Lebanon is a part of the MedWet Coast project. This project overall objective is to conserve globally endangered species and their habitats improving the capacity of governmental and non governmental agencies to address biodiversity conservation issues in two main sites: The Tyre Nature Reserve and the Wetland of Ammiq. Currently there are 4 Ramsar sites in Lebanon (4,016 hectares):

1. Tyre Coast Nature Reserve site 980 declared in 16\04\1999
2. Ras El Chaqaa site 979 declared in 16\04\1999
3. Palm Island Nature Reserve site 1079 declared in 03\08\2001
4. Ammiq Wetland site 978 declared in 16\04\1999

Morocco

Morocco is a Contracting Party to several international environment conventions related to migratory bird conservation and hunting as shown in the table—under section 5. The Government of Morocco represented by the Ministry of Regional Planning, Water and Environment (MATT) is knowledgeable about the country's obligations required by the conventions and undertakes the responsibility of fulfilling the obligations under the CBD, and the Convention on Climate Change whereas the Higher Commission for Water and Forests and Combating Desertification (Haut Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts, et la Lutte contre la Desertification, HCEFLCD) undertakes the responsibility of fulfilling the obligations under CBD, CMS, CITES, AEW, Ramsar, Bern and the Convention on Desertification.

There are several ongoing projects in Morocco in order to fulfill the objectives of the conventions, some of which are implemented in coordination and collaboration with other countries:

CBD: To fulfill its obligations towards the CBD, Morocco concluded a study on biological diversity including birds, another study on monitoring biological diversity and including birds, created a website for the exchange of information on biological diversity and ratified Law on environmental impact analysis and Law on environmental protection and rehabilitation.

CMS: To fulfill its obligations towards the CMS, Morocco has established national parks and reserves, drafted the natural reserves law and implemented several work programs:

CITES: To fulfill its obligations towards the CITES, Morocco monitors the trading of migratory birds enlisted in CITES, coordination and exchange of information with other Contracting Parties to ensure compliance, and prepared a draft law on Trade of endangered species.:

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS

AEWA: To fulfill its obligations towards the AEWA, Morocco has made it mandatory to attain hunting license, and becoming a member at the Royal Hunting Society and other any of the hunting societies

Ramsar: To fulfill its obligations towards the AEWA, Morocco registered 24 sites as RAMSAR sites, established the national center for wetlands, and established environmental education centers at the wetlands.

Palestine

The existing law for hunting is derived from the Jordanian law, but doesn't identify the kind of species allowed to be hunted. There have been some attempts by the Governor of Jericho to pass few resolutions to control hunting in the Jericho area. However, due to the difficult circumstances in the country, law enforcement is hard to ensure.

There are a number of ongoing projects within the Palestinian National Authority at the Ministry of Environmental Affairs, one of which is of relevance to the subject matter:

A Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Project funded by GEF through the UNDP and executed in collaboration with IUCN will prepare a mechanism for action and framework for biodiversity conservation and management along with an assessment survey on the state of biodiversity, protected areas and nature conservation in the Palestinian Territories.

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

The State Secretariat in charge of the Environment is the responsible authority for environment related issues in the country. Algeria promulgated its first hunting and environment protection laws in 1982-83. These were followed by various decrees and government orders establishing lists of protected animals and plants, and the creation of new protected areas. In 2003, in the context of sustainable development, a new law was passed for environment protection. In addition, a new hunting law was passed in 2004.

Algeria is a Contracting Party to several international conventions as shown in the Table under- Section 5. It is a signatory to a number of international treaties designed to protect or manage biological resources of relevance to the subject matter which are:

- African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
- Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas
- International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa
- Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS

Algeria wetlands are considered among the most important sites for migratory birds. So far Algeria has registered 42 RAMSAR sites with an area of 2.8 million hectare, with the aim to reach 80 sites. It is considered the third and eighth in Africa and the world respectively. It provides a site for more than 500 thousand migratory birds a year.

Syrian Arab Republic

The Ministry of Interior Affairs is the only body that is responsible for hunting management and usage of guns. However, hunting legislation falls exclusively under the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture. The Hunting Law is currently under review by the Higher Council for Wildlife Hunting. Syria has issued the following strategies and action plans:

- National action plan to combat desertification
- National Biodiversity Strategy
- Environment strategy and action plan

Syria is also a Party to the following with signature, ratification and entry into force dates as shown respectively:

- Biosafety Protocol, 1/29/2004, 29-Jan-04, 30/06/2004
- Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean., 6/7/1993, 17-Jun-05
- ACCOBAMS, 8/13/2001, 13-Aug-01, 13-Nov-01
- Kyoto Protocol, 27-Jan-06, 1997, 1997
- Climate Change Convention, 12/10/1995, 12/10/1995, 4/3/1996

With regards to fulfilling its obligations towards international conventions/ agreements/ protocols, there are several ongoing projects in Syria such as:

CBD: The GCEA is responsible to implement the entire COP decisions. It supervises the biodiversity status in Syria, and it works on conservation of the biodiversity by sharing with other national institutions to announce the Protected Areas in the main region which is required the protection, in addition to the implementation of awareness campaigns, and the needed tools for conservation.

CMS: The GCEA is working on the implementation of this convention by conservation the main & rare migratory species as (Bald Ibis, Asian Houbara and Sociable Lapwing).

CITES: The Ministry of Local Administration & Environment supervises trade on all Birds listed on the three CITES Annexes and cooperates with the Syrian customs to control illegal trade with all bird products, and organize the trade process on endangered species.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS

AEWA: Efforts to fulfill the obligations include public awareness campaigns, updating of hunting law, capacity building, and protection of the bird species listed in AEWA Tables.

Ramsar: The Ministry of Irrigation (Which is responsible for applying the Ramsar convention) supervises the wetlands in Syria, and Ministry of Agriculture declared some wetland sites as Protected Areas.

Biosafety Protocol: The GCEA is responsible with the other Ministries as (Agriculture, Trade & Economic, Atomic Energy) to implement all the Biosafety regulations, laws and guidelines, and only GCEA is responsible on implementation all the biosafety projects in Syria.

Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean: One of Action Plans for this protocol aims to protect the marine and coastal birds, MLAEC began to implement this action plan,

Furthermore, there has been some cooperation and coordination with regional countries such as:

- Cooperation with Saudi Arabia to declare the new CMS convention about Asian Houbara)
- Coordination and cooperation with many countries specially in the region (Jordan, Emirate, Saudi Arabia) to implement CITES and Capacity Building.
- Many activities related to AEWA are being implemented in cooperation with the countries in the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Kazakhstan, Yemen) Governmental & NGOs. For example the Soaring Birds, IBAs, Bald IBIS Projects, and the Sociable Plover.

Tunisia

There is a diversity of institutions in Tunisia in charge of the environment. They are led by the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, which is responsible for the conception, and implementation of a national policy of environment protection.

In Tunisia two ministries are in charge of international agreements related to migratory bird conservation and hunting: the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Ressources Hydrauliques – MAHR) and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable – MEDD). Both Ministries are responsible for the conception, the implementation and the enforcement of the national policy of environment and nature protection which grants due consideration to national priorities while observing the country's commitments towards international conventions.

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCS**

As for the conventions and agreements mentioned under section 5 the MARH is the focal point for the CITES, the AEWA, the RAMSAR Convention, the Barcelona Convention and the African Convention whereas the MEDD is in charge of the CBD and the CMS.

Tunisia has been keen on monitoring the work done on international conventions in collaboration with the NGOs, private sector, and international community. Several environment related initiatives are being undertaken in the context of bilateral or multilateral cooperation such as:

- An agreement with the EU to list conservation of the environment and sustainable development as national priority under the Neighbourliness Policy, whereas the priority fields include preservation of natural resources and the implementation of Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity.
- Euro-Mediterranean partnership initiative on combating pollution, which constitutes a threat to the ecosystem, in the Mediterranean Sea for the time Frame 2020.
- Cooperation with the GEF on a capacity building and information exchange project on biological diversity, preparing a national report on biological diversity, and updating the National Communication and National Action Plan on biological diversity.
- A project funded by the World Bank aiming to develop conservation related research, monitoring, capacity building and awareness raising in three national parks: Ichkeul, Bouhedma and Jbil National Park.

Tunisia regularly participates in meetings and events organized by the different Conventions Secretariats, whereas on national level it organizes seminars and meetings to measure progress towards meeting the country's commitments and revision of national policy accordingly.

With regards to migratory birds, Tunisia is committed to the conservation of important stop over sites such as wetlands, islands, etc. Furthermore the country established an exemplary legal framework, Law no 20 of 1988, to reduce abusive hunting and to develop sustainable hunting practices. Many efforts are made to ensure effective hunting management and law enforcement and special entities are in place to control hunting activities all over the country.

Furthermore, much was achieved with regard to monitoring of priority bird conservation sites and migratory bird populations during the last 10 years. Regular Important Bird Area (IBA) monitoring and water bird census took place in collaboration between government agencies and Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" (AAO), the BirdLife International Partner in Tunisia, which provided up-to-date data for international action plans under different multilateral agreements (AEWA, Ramsar Convention, Barcelona Convention, etc.)

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCs**

Tunisia grants special attention to wetlands, which represent a habitat for endangered water birds species and other biodiversity. The country has over 250 wetlands, either natural or manmade. It is estimated that more than 500 thousand waterbirds migrate over Tunisia. Only one site, the Ichkeul National Park, is actually designated under the Ramsar Convention, but it is expected that 15 new sites, for which the designation process is underway, will soon be recognized under this convention.

7 Cooperation and coordination among MTCs in fulfilling their obligations

There are a number of regional projects and programs, examples of which are:

Conservation of Wetlands and Coastal Zones in the Mediterranean (March 2002-March 2006, MoE/FFEM/UNDP), which is a Mediterranean initiative under the Ramsar Convention. It is a regional project that includes Lebanon, Albania, Tunisia, Morocco, and the Palestinian Authority. The regional component is managed and coordinated by the Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) based at the biological station Tour du Valat in France.

The overall development objective of the MedWetCoast project in Lebanon is to conserve globally endangered species and their habitats recognizing nature conservation as an integral part of sustainable human development, while improving the capacity of governmental and non-governmental agencies to address biodiversity conservation issues in two main sites: the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve and the Wetland of Ammiq.

The “African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Flyways” GEF Project

In 2003, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) agreed to finance a US\$12 million project within the AEWA area. The African-Eurasian Flyway project aims to enhance and coordinate catalytic strategic measures to conserve a network of critical wetland areas that migratory waterbirds depend upon to complete their annual cycle. There are three linked components to the project: establishing a network of sites, enhancing technical capacity and improving communication and coordination. Project activities include: the development of a network of sites through surveys, training and knowledge base development, a training and awareness raising program, demonstration projects for best practices aiming at showing practitioners how to manage sites in a sustainable manner and communications, including web based resources, a project newsletter and publications. The project started in July 2006 and will last until the end of 2010.

The NGO Twinning project lead by SPNL in Lebanon

The project aims at boosting the knowledge base of Mediterranean NGOs, and promoting effective cooperation with authorities and multiple stakeholders for the sake of nature conservation. It will cooperate with the various stakeholders for capacity building and

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND MANAGEMENT OF BIRD HUNTING IN THE MTCs**

transfer of expertise on best practices of conserving nature. This aim would be established by creating partnerships between EU-based mentoring NGO (MedWet) and non-EU Mediterranean NGOs (SPNL & RSCN).

Through this twinning partnership, an atmosphere of transfer of knowledge and expertise will be created wherein MedWet will interact with both SPNL and RSCN NGOs, for enhancing their capacity and effectiveness in conservation. Henceforth, the project will operate within the framework of EU policies and directives for the transfer of expertise and capacities.

8 Conclusion

Although many MTCs have recently revised or are in the process of revising their environmental legislation, no country has yet fully translated the obligations towards international conventions and treaties which support migratory bird conservation into effective national hunting legislation and implementing regulations. In the majority of the countries where such legislation exists, the enforcement and implementation is inadequate.

Some MTCs include the implementation of these conventions and agreements in the national environmental strategies and action plans. However, there is lack of data and monitoring mechanisms to check compliance. In addition, there is lack of clarity and awareness among all the stakeholders on the obligations stipulated by the conventions.

There is evident cooperation between the government and civil societies in implementing international conventions within a country and among MTCs, specifically on projects that are supported by the international community.