

Africa CAP of Nations match ends in a 2 all draw

The dust has finally settled on the football pitch which saw the end of the BirdLife Council for the Africa Partnership (CAP) meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, on 30 March 2012. Teams comprising CEOs and staff of BirdLife Partners from all-over Africa and Europe, as well as BirdLife Secretariat staff from Cambridge, Nairobi and Accra, flexed their muscles and released some of the meeting's stress during a highly competitive match that ended in a final score of 2-2. In the days before this climactic event, 80 people from about 30 African and European countries sat together and discussed conservation problems, successes and strategies during five consecutive, long days (26-30 March). Side meetings started even before breakfast and lasted until late at night, while the preparations for the next day's official agenda would take place every evening, bringing together daily 'management teams' comprised of both Partner and Secretariat staff. On 28 March 2012, a high level cocktail with the theme "The Role of Forests in a Green Economy" took place at the residence of the Spanish Ambassador to Kenya in Nairobi. The event was organized by the BirdLife International Africa Secretariat and NatureKenya (BirdLife in Kenya) in collaboration with the Spanish Embassy, to showcase the Government of Spain's commitment to sustainable development in Africa and to present BirdLife's flagship 'Forests of Hope' Programme to a wide range of African and European government, non-government, diplomatic representatives and corporate leaders. The cocktail was opened by the Spanish Ambassador, H.E. Javier Herrera, followed by a speech by Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Deputy Director of UNEP's Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, who represented the Guest of Honour, Executive Director for UNEP, Mr. Achim Steiner, and Dr. Marco Lambertini, the BirdLife International Chief Executive. All speakers reiterated the importance of conserving and restoring degraded forest landscapes and their important role in a 'green economy'. Other highlights during the meeting included an opening ceremony with a keynote speech from the Kenyan Minister for Forestry and Wildlife, the Hon Dr Noah Wekesa; a highly interactive strategy development session; interesting field trips; daily bird walks led by local experts; an informative 'poster session' where Partners showcased their work; and a BirdLife branding brainstorm. Final decisions were made during the 'CAP business meeting', after which everybody ran to the pitch to kick that ball. A summary report of the meeting will be published soon, while more stories will be shared through the BirdLife Africa e-bulletin and the BirdLife Africa/Afrique Newsletter.