



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

12th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

31 January – 01 February 2017, Paris, France

REPORT OF THE MEETING¹

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¹ Report finalised after a process of consultation with the Standing Committee in June 2017.

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StC12 Decision and Required Actions

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION	ACTION
Agenda item 2.	Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme	The Meeting adopted the agenda and provisional work programme.	
Agenda item 3.	Welcome and Admission of Observers	The Meeting agreed to admit the Observers present at the meeting.	
Agenda item 4.	Reports by: <i>a. Standing Committee Regional Members and Party Observers</i>		Regional Representatives should urge the countries in their regions to keep the Secretariat up-dated about the contact details of their Focal Points, to enable quick and effective communication.
	<i>d. Secretariat</i>	The Meeting decided that the results of the review of the grading of the Secretariat's posts should be presented to MOP7 for the information of the Parties and that an additional budget scenario should be developed, reflecting the effect in budget, as a result of the up-grading of the four P2 positions and the P3 position. In the meantime, the respective job titles and job descriptions should be adjusted, while maintaining the positions at the same level.	The Secretariat will initiate the adjustment of the job titles and job descriptions of the proposed five up-graded positions, as well as including the results of the review and the related additional budget scenario in the relevant meeting documentation for MOP7
	<i>e. UNEP</i>		In the context of pollution, which was currently being addressed by the UNEA, Mr Trouvilliez will contact the UNEP/CMS Secretariat to see if this issue can be added to the agenda of the up-coming 2 nd Workshop of the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working group (PPWG2).
Agenda item 5.	The 7 th Ordinary Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA		The Secretariat should continue its efforts to work with potential host countries and inform the StC at the end of March 2017 of the outcome.

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION	ACTION
	<u>National Reporting</u>	The revised format for national reports presented in document AEWA/StC 12.7 was approved for use in the MOP7 reporting cycle.	The Secretariat will have the revised format transferred into an online format within the CMS Family Online Reporting System in English and French language versions.
	<u>Status of document production</u>		<p>On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat should strongly urge the Parties to pledge support towards the production of the priority mandatory documents by the end of March 2017, to enable them to be commissioned in time for MOP7 and to keep the StC informed of the outcome.</p> <p>The Technical Committee is requested to continue with efforts to deliver the documents which are part of the TC Work Plan 2016-2018.</p>
Agenda item 8.	Development of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 and AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027	Fundraising should continue towards the development of the PoAA 2019-2027 and depending on the outcome, the Standing Committee would decide at the end of March as to how to proceed.	
Agenda item 9.	Implementation Review Process (IRP)	<p><u>Afforestation in Iceland:</u> The Meeting adopted the set of recommendations laid down in the mission report and adopted by the Bern Convention StC36 in Bern Recommendation No. 190 (2016).</p> <p><u>Windfarms in Bulgaria:</u> The Secretariat should explore the possibility of extending this case to the European Commission following their process. If this approach proved unsuccessful, then it would be reviewed again by the StC.</p>	The Secretariat will contact the European Commission to discuss the extension of this case to the EC process.

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION	ACTION
		<i>Salina drainage in Montenegro</i> : The Secretariat should continue to monitor the case, while working with the Ramsar and Barcelona Conventions and advise the StC on the outcome.	The Secretariat will continue to monitor the case and advise the StC on the outcome.
		<i>Illegal hunting of Sociable Lapwing in Syria</i> : Should be kept on hold.	
		<i>Windfarms in France</i> : The French windfarm case should remain as a watching brief and France would keep the Secretariat and the Standing Committee informed.	
Agenda item 10.	Outputs of the Technical Committee Work Plan 2016-2018		
	<i>a. Waterbird population delineation</i>	The General Guidance on the Definition of Species Populations under AEWA (document AEWA/StC 12.11) was adopted by the Meeting.	
		The Meeting approved the delineation of the selected populations as laid down by the TC in document AEWA/StC 12.12 rev.1. The TC would continue to work on the delineation of the Tern populations and the Eurasian Spoonbill for approval by the StC intersessionally.	The Secretariat will submit the delineation of the Tern species and Eurasian Spoonbill to the Standing Committee intersessionally for approval.
	<i>b. Species action and management plans</i>	The Meeting took note of the progress made regarding the assessment of the prolongation, revision and retirement of select AEWA International Single Species Action Plans, including the preliminary recommendations of the Technical Committee and would review and approve the recommended treatment of the	The Secretariat will provide the StC with the recommended treatment of the select AEWA ISSAPs for temporary approval.

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION	ACTION
		select AEWA International Single Species Action Plans, via correspondence, on a temporary basis, subject to the final approval by MOP7.	
		The Meeting provisionally approved the Revised Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans, presented in document AEWA/StC 12.14 Rev.1 for use (with the inclusion of the EU suggestions), subject to the final approval by MOP7.	
	<i>c. Conservation guideline format</i>	The Meeting approved the Revised Format for AEWA Conservation Guidelines, as presented in document AEWA/StC 12.15.	
Agenda item 11.	New Arabic Translation of the Agreement Text	After the initial formatting amendments, to be carried out by the StC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa, Mr Essam Bouras, the Secretariat will circulate the new draft Arabic version of the Agreement text to the Arabic speaking Contracting Parties and selected non-Party Range States for comments	The Secretariat will circulate the new draft Arabic version of the Agreement text to the Arabic-speaking countries and selected non-Party Range States for comments. The Secretariat will subsequently forward the Arabic version of the Agreement text to the Standing Committee members for approval and further transmission to the Depositary for notification to the Parties.
Agenda item 12.	Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit	The Meeting noted the report with appreciation and fully supported the continuation of the pilot.	Future reports by the Secretariat to the Standing Committee should follow the request of Resolution 6.22 to report on cost savings.
Agenda item 13.	<i>a. Execution of the 2013-2015 and 2016-2018 budgets</i>	The Meeting took note of the report and expected to receive an updated version once all the necessary reversals had been carried out.	The Secretariat will prepare an up-dated version of the report and forward this to the StC intersessionally.

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION	ACTION
	<u>c. Status of AEWA contributions in arrears</u>	The Meeting decided to publish and maintain an up-to-date list of contributions in arrears on the AEWA website.	<p>The Secretariat should forward invoices to the relevant national Focal Points for follow-up.</p> <p>The Secretariat should publish and regularly update the status of contributions and arrears on the AEWA website.</p> <p>Mr Trouvilliez will explore other appropriate actions to reduce the amount of arrears.</p>
	<u>d. AEWA scale of contributions for 2019-2021</u>	<p>In connection with the scale of contributions and in preparation for the scenarios for presentation to MOP7, the Meeting decided on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To keep the minimum contribution at 2,000 EUR;</i> • <i>To fix the EU contribution at the original 2,5%;</i> • <i>To retain the maximum threshold at 20%;</i> • <i>To return to the UN scale of assessments while implementing a gradual transitional period consisting of two MOP cycles (six years); and</i> • <i>To direct contributions from new Parties into the AEWA Trust Fund.</i> 	The Secretariat will approach countries where a high increase in the annual contribution is expected under the UN scale of assessments, to discuss the possible option of a step-by-step increase within the transitional period.
Agenda item 14.	Outcome of the Analysis of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the Standing Committee	The Meeting amended the StC Rules of Procedure to align them with Resolution 2.6 and decided that the Secretariat should continue consultations on the issue of tenure of office for Standing Committee Members (also with UNEP), in order to be able to present an appropriate draft resolution to the next StC Meeting before MOP7.	Mr Jiří Hlaváček would provide the Secretariat with a table comparing the relevant Rules of Procedure of other MEA Standing Committees, in order to help with the alignment of Rule 17 of the StC RoP.

Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. In his capacity as Chair of the Standing Committee, Mr Barirega Akankwasah opened the 12th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee (StC12) and welcomed all those present. He thanked France for the warm hospitality and excellent meeting facilities provided, in the beautiful city of Paris. He also thanked the Assistant Director of the Directorate for Water and Biodiversity (DEB) of the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and the Sea (MEEM) of France, Mr Christian Le Coz and his staff for hosting StC12. The last Meeting of the StC had taken place over a year ago, directly after MOP6 in November 2015, where the present membership had been elected. He went on to thank all AEWA stakeholders for their resolve and commitment towards the implementation of the Agreement.

2. Representing MEEM, Mr Christian Le Coz expressed his pleasure at being able to host this Meeting, particularly since France was the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee. France was very committed to AEWA and the goal of sustainable use of natural resources in general and French ecosystems were very important for migratory waterbirds. France also strongly supported the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA). He went on to confirm France's commitment to the AEWA European Goose Management Platform, for which France had also hosted the kick-off meeting in 2016 and that France was eager to commence with the development of a management plan for the Greylag Goose in that framework. AEWA had accomplished a great deal, but was still facing many challenges, in order to secure the survival of migratory waterbirds and their habitats. He was convinced that the decision taken at this meeting would provide new impetus for the Agreement and towards the protection of migratory waterbirds. He wished all those present a fruitful meeting.

3. Representing the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, Executive Secretary, Mr Jacques Trouvilliez greeted all those present and thanked the French Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Sea for hosting the Meeting and Mr Le Coz for his kind words. He went on to thank France for supporting the EGMP and the management planning process for the Greylag Goose. Being the first Sanding Committee Meeting since MOP6, this was a good opportunity to discuss what could be proposed to MOP7 with regard to both technical and financial issues, to enable sufficient time for intersessional consultation with Parties. He went on to introduce the other members of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat attending the Meeting, AEWA Technical Officer, Mr Sergey Dereliev and Programme Management Assistant, Ms Jolanta Kremer, as well as the CMS family Administrative and Fund Management Officer, Ms Sandra Rucker, who would support the presentation of the budget and finance-related agenda items. He also mentioned that unfortunately one of the two representatives for Europe and Central Asia was not able to attend. The alternate, Norway, represented by Mr Øystein Størkensen, would replace her at this meeting.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

4. Since there were no proposals to amend the Agenda and Work Programme (document AEWA/StC 12.2 Rev.2), the Chair declared this adopted.

<i>Decision:</i>	<i>The Meeting adopted the agenda and provisional work programme.</i>
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Agenda item 3. Welcome and Admission of Observers

5. The Chair informed the members about the Parties not members of the Committee, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations represented at this meeting, thereby referring to document AEWA/StC Inf. 12.8 Rev.2 *Provisional List of Participants*.

<i>Decision:</i>	<i>The Meeting agreed to admit the Observers present.</i>
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Agenda item 4. Reports by:

a. Standing Committee Regional Members and Party Observers

6. The Chair noted that written reports had been submitted on behalf of Europe and Central Asia, Western and Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa regions. These were available as StC12 [Information Documents](#) on the AEWA website.

7. In his capacity as Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, Mr François Lamarque raised the point that contacting the Focal Points of the countries in his region had proved difficult because some of the email addresses on the list provided by the Secretariat no longer functioned. He had been in touch with Portugal and confirmed that Portugal had designated a new AEWA Focal Point, the contact details of which would be communicated to the Secretariat shortly.

8. AEWA Technical Officer, Mr Sergey Dereliev noted that the Secretariat provided as up-to-date a list of Focal Points as possible; however, this was dependent upon feedback from the countries and their prompt action in communicating any changes. He requested that the Regional Representatives could communicate this to the countries in their regions and urge them to keep the Secretariat informed at all times.

9. On behalf of Norway, Mr Øystein Størkersen reported that Norway had long been a strong supporter of AEWA and that much could be done, if the appropriate funds were in place, which had often been proved. He very much appreciated the professional work that the Secretariat was doing. He stressed his total trust in the management of funds and handling of the budget. He confirmed that Norway would continue to support wherever possible.

10. The Chair thanked Norway for the continuing support.

<i>Action:</i>	<i>Regional Representatives should urge the countries in their regions to keep the Secretariat up-dated with regard to the contact details of their Focal Points, to enable quick and effective communication.</i>
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b. Technical Committee

11. The Chair of the Technical Committee, Mr Saulius Svazas, reported that the first meeting of the Technical Committee (TC) during the triennium 2016 - 2018 (TC13) had been held on 14-17 March 2016 in Nasholim, Israel, hosted by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, in collaboration with the Israel Ornithological Center of the Society for the Protection of Nature. On behalf of the TC, he expressed his gratitude to the authorities and NGOs of Israel and to all involved in the organisation of this perfectly organised meeting, the main aim of which had been to determine the programme of work of the Technical Committee for the period 2016-2018.

12. After providing those present with an overview of the current TC membership, Mr Svazas went on to express his thanks to the former TC Chair, Mr David Stroud, who participated in TC13 in his capacity as country Observer for the UK and AEWA's liaison officer with the Ramsar Convention. His experience had been essential for the success of the Meeting and he was the principal author of several documents drafted by the Technical Committee for discussion at the present Meeting.

13. Delivery of the Technical Committee's work in 2016: The TC Work Plan for the period 2016-2018, which provided the basis for the Committee's work had been presented to and approved by MOP6. The total number

of planned tasks following the requests to the TC by the last Meeting of Parties had significantly increased in comparison with the previous triennium, however there was a significant lack of funds available for implementation of most tasks. Therefore, most tasks listed in TC Work Plan for the period 2016-2018 were dependent on internal TC capacity.

14. In addition to tasks resulting from the Resolutions of MOP6, the work undertaken by the Committee also included the development and review of AEWA guidelines, the review process and the selection procedure related to the Small Grants Fund and participation in emerging issues of potential significance for waterbird conservation. Amongst the tasks, TC13 had identified 14 top priority tasks.

15. As in the past, tasks had been divided up between eight Working Groups, each with a Chair responsible for supervising and leading the necessary work. Membership of the Working Groups comprised regional representatives, thematic experts, NGO representatives and observers, as well as at least one representative of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. Communication between Committee members via the Technical Committee Workspace continued to be facilitated by the online TC Workspace.

16. Among all identified priority tasks, the development of AEWA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2027 was evaluated by TC13 as being the most important task. Members of the TC had actively participated in the Meeting of the Strategic Plan Working Group held in Bonn in June 2016 and had also contributed to its further drafting.

17. The TC Chair had participated in the launching meeting of the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) held in Paris in May 2016 and in the First Meeting of the European Goose Management International Working Group held in Sweden in December 2016.

18. The new regulation of the European Commission aimed at phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands was developed by the European Chemical Agency and the input of the TC Vice-Chair, Dr Ruth Cromie, had been essential during the meeting on this topic held in September 2016.

19. For successful implementation of many tasks included in the TC Work Plan, close and continuous collaboration with the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention was planned. Dr David Stroud would participate in the Ramsar STRP Meeting to be held in February 2017 where he would suggest possible areas and ways for collaboration between the AEWA TC and Ramsar STRP.

20. TC members had actively taken care of cases of certain emergency situations, such as the extreme weather conditions negatively impacting wintering waterbirds in Southeastern Europe. The letter of AEWA Executive Secretary regarding the cold weather spell in certain parts of Europe recently sent to the countries concerned, was an example of a prompt and appropriate action in such conditions.

21. The next Technical Committee Meeting (TC14), scheduled to take place in early 2018 would be the last one before MOP7.

22. The Chair expressed his sincere appreciation to the entire Technical Committee, which was the engine guiding the implementation of the whole Agreement.

c. Depositary

23. On behalf of the Depositary, Ms Wilmar Remmelts reported that the Republic of Belarus had ratified the Agreement in January 2016. There had also been some reservations, which were specified in document AEWA/StC 12.4.

d. Secretariat

24. Introducing document AEWA/StC12.5, Report of the Secretariat, Dr Trouvilliez reported on the activities of the Secretariat for the period between 01 December 2015 and 31 December 2016. He referred to the organigram in Annex 1 of the document, which showed the four units that the Secretariat team, which consisted of 10 staff members, was divided into.

25. With regard to staffing, the aim was to use savings to increase part-time positions and thus the service offered to the Parties. He thanked Norway for providing the funds for the full-time position of Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plans and Switzerland for supporting the African Initiative Unit by providing the funds to maintain the P-2 position (African Initiative Coordinator) at 100% and the G-4 (Programme Assistant) position at 80%. In addition, a number of interns had been recruited to support the work of the joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA Unit).

26. At MOP6, the Parties had requested to re-classify the four existing G4 positions to G5. This process had now been completed and the up-graded job openings would probably be published shortly. He went on to report about the mandate given to the Secretariat by the Standing Committee to commission a review of the grading of the Secretariat's posts, following the exercise, which the UNEP/CMS Secretariat had been requested to initiate at the CMS COP11.

27. The result of the review delivered in November, which had been distributed to the StC Members, was that the four AEWA P2 positions and the P3 position should all be up-graded, which if implemented, would imply an increase in budget. The results of this review would be presented to MOP7 for the information of the Parties, and the effects of these upgraded positions should be included in, at least, one of the budget scenarios requested by resolution 6.18, operative paragraph 5. In the meantime, the job titles and descriptions of the relevant positions would be revised to better reflect the tasks and responsibilities of the staff members.

<i>Decision:</i>	<i>The Meeting decided that the results of the review should be presented to MOP7 for the information of the Parties and that an additional budget scenario should be developed, reflecting the effect in budget, as a result of the up-grading of the four P2 positions and the P3 position. In the meantime, the respective job titles and job descriptions should be adjusted, while maintaining the positions at the same level.</i>
<i>Action:</i>	<i>The Secretariat will initiate the adjustment of the job titles and job descriptions of the proposed five up-graded positions, as well as including the results of the review and the related budget scenario in the relevant meeting documentation for MOP7.</i>

28. Mr Størkersen concurred that the levels of CMS family positions were lower compared to those of other MEAs, which would have to be addressed in conjunction with the relevant budget discussions.

29. With regard to the new Enterprise Resource Planning administrative system, Umoja, which had been launched in 2015, things seemed to be improving despite long processing times for many transactions. In order to reduce the workload of travel-related transactions, the Secretariat had been obliged to provide a certifying officer for travel to support the work of the joint CMS family Administrative and Fund Management Unit.

30. Umoja was designed to support the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), which the UN General Assembly requested the United Nations Entities to adopt in Resolution 60/281 of July 2006. In document AEWA/StC Inf. 12.6 UNEP provided an insight into the budgetary implications of IPSAS on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). One of the major differences to past procedures was that payments could no longer be made without the availability of the respective funds. This meant that the timely

payment of contributions was all the more important. He went on to report that all MEAs would be required to contribute to the related licence and audit fees, which could amount to ca. 1% of the budget. This was currently being discussed within the CMS family and would be reported once clear.

31. Cooperation with UNEP had increased and Mr Trouvilliez thanked Mr Jiří Hlaváček, Head of MEAs Support and Coordination at UNEP for his continuing support. Amongst the CMS family, efforts were being made to increase programmatic synergies, in order to increase the efficiency of the two Secretariats; AEWA was already supporting a number of processes led by CMS e.g. the CMS review process and the prevention of illegal killing of birds.

32. The Secretariat continued to work very closely with Birdlife International, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) and the Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the AEWA African Initiative, established at MOP5 in 2012 with support from the French Ministry of Ecology (MEDDE).

33. Dr Trouvilliez thanked the Governments of Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and the Czech Republic for providing funds to support a long list of projects, as well as Secretariat staff. The AEWA core budget covered staff and running costs of the Secretariat with a minimum allocated for the meetings of the AEWA Bodies.

34. Building on AEWA's first strategic plan, the development of the new Strategic Plan, for the period 2019-2027 was being led by the Technical Officer, Mr Dereliev, the Head of the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit, which had also been involved in the organisation and facilitation of a number of species-related meetings and workshops during the last year, not least, the inter-governmental meeting, which took place in May 2016, and was kindly hosted by France, to launch the AEWA European Goose Management Platform, a mechanism to provide an international, shared approach to the management of goose populations.

35. Since then the Secretariat had convened the European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG), the first [meeting](#) of which had been kindly hosted by Sweden in Kristianstad in December 2016 and had focused on the management plan for the Pink-footed Goose and the action plan for the Taiga Bean Goose. Planning had advanced and the development of the management plans for the Barnacle and Greylag Geese would begin in 2017, depending on the availability of sufficient funds.

36. On behalf of OMPO, the Director, Mr Alexandre Czajkowski highlighted the importance of the role of AEWA in the promotion of the concept of adaptive management, as well as in establishing close collaboration with hunting organisations.

e. UNEP

37. On behalf of UNEP, Head of MEAs Support and Coordination, Mr Jiří Hlaváček was pleased to be able to participate in the meeting and see the needs of AEWA and how these could be reflected in the work of UN Environment. He outlined the resolutions, which the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) had adopted at its second Session in May 2016, highlighting those of particular significance for the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009 – 2018 (see document AEWA/StC 12.6). He also stressed the importance of the linkages between the strategic plans of the biodiversity-related MEAs and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and pointed out the UNEP publication to that effect, which had been launched at [UNEA2](#).

38. He mentioned Resolution 2/17 on enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions, in particular establishing an institutional framework (MoUs between UNEP and the relevant MEAs) and accountability, administrative and financial framework and mutual supportiveness of the relevant Programmes of Work. With regard to Resolution 2/18 on the

relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats, he mentioned, in particular, delegation of authority to the MEAs and the waiving of Programme Support Costs (PSC) on voluntary contributions (13%) for participation costs, when participation is arranged by administrative staff financed by the PSC.

39. He finished by thanking the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the good cooperation with UNEP and also with the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, as well as all donors supporting the implementation of AEWA with voluntary contributions.

40. The Chair expressed his sincere appreciation to the staff of UNEP for providing the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

Dr Trouvilliez confirmed that collaboration with UNEP had improved greatly, but that no MoU between UNEP and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat had been signed as yet. He stressed the long duration of many processes, which hamper the work of the Secretariat, in particular with regard to recruitment. He looked forward to the next meeting of the UNEA and to the continuation of the good collaboration.

41. Following a short discussion, Mr Trouvilliez confirmed that he would work with the CMS family on the issue of addressing pollution, which was being addressed by the UNEA and that this could perhaps be included into the programme of the upcoming 2nd Workshop of the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group (PPWG2), 20-21 February 2017 in Toledo, Spain and that the outcomes of that workshop could be forwarded to the UNEA.

42. The Chair thanked Mr Hlaváček for his report, confirming that AEWA-related UNEA Resolutions would be implemented wherever possible.

<i>Action:</i>	<i>Mr Trouvilliez will contact the UNEP/CMS Secretariat with regard to the issue of pollution and the up-coming PPWG2.</i>
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f. Other Observers

43. On behalf of the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, Mr Bradnee Chambers took the opportunity to underline the close collaboration between the UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/CMS Secretariats, where staff members interacted on a daily basis on various issues, e.g. poisoning, illegal killing of birds and renewable energies, thereby exchanging experience and expertise. He thanked Mr Trouvilliez for supporting these programmatic synergies, as well as Mr Dereliev for his very valuable contribution to the 1st Meeting of the Working Group on the Development of a Review Process under CMS, where Parties were able to learn from the very successful AEWA Implementation Review Process (IRP). Regular meetings on cross-cutting management issues were also taking place, which were helping to strengthen this important relationship.

44. The Chair thanked Mr Chambers for this positive feedback about the good relationship between the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats, which was highly valued.

Agenda item 5. The 7th Ordinary Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA

Date and venue

45. Mr Trouvilliez reported that MOP7 was planned to take place in November 2018. Despite all the efforts made, no host country had been identified as yet. Five potential hosts had declined and communication was ongoing with two further countries, both in Africa. He hoped to have a decision by the end of March 2017,

after which a decision would have to be made as to whether to hold the meeting in Bonn for the second time running.

46. The Chair concluded that the Secretariat should continue working with the relevant countries and to communicate the outcome to the StC at the end of March, so that a decision could be made.

<i>Decision:</i>	<i>The Secretariat should continue its efforts to work with potential host countries and inform the StC at the end of March 2017 of the outcome.</i>
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National reporting

47. Referring to document AEWA StC 12.7 *Revision of the Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA*, Mr Dereliev gave a brief history of the development of the present version of the National Reporting Format (NRF), which had been elaborated together with the development of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 and adopted through Resolution 4.7. in 2008. Since then, the StC had adopted some pertinent amendments and it had been successfully used for reporting to MOP5 in May 2012, through the CMS Family Online Reporting System developed by UNEP-WCMC under the guidance of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, which also allowed for useful analysis and synthesis.

48. A similar cycle of events followed in advance of MOP6. Document AEWA StC 12.7 presented a proposal for a further refined version for the period 2015-2017 to be used for MOP7 in 2018. This proposal was developed by the AEWA Technical Committee as part of its 2016-2018 Work Plan and took into account the MOP6 decisions and newly-introduced reporting requirements. The NRF would be available in English and French and would be pre-filled on the online system with the information from the past reporting cycle.

49. In answer to some concerns by Parties with regard to the slow loading of pages and, particularly, the difficulties experienced in countries with poor internet connections, he reported that the responsibility for the system and its maintenance was with the host of the system UNEP-WCMC. A grant had been received to improve the system and the CMS COP12 reporting was already based on the new improved platform, which should speed up the access substantially. Users should, of course, try to get good internet access and appropriate computers. It was hoped that the system could be improved further in future and, in that context, any constructive criticism was always welcome. The intention was to make the online format for national reports on the implementation of AEWA for the period 2015-2017 available to Parties in May 2017, for submission in May 2018, six months before MOP7, which is scheduled to take place in November 2018.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The revised format for national reports presented in document AEWA/StC 12.7 was approved for use in the MOP7 reporting cycle.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat will have the revised format transferred into an online format within the CMS Family Online Reporting System in English and French language versions</i>

Status of document production

50. Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/StC 12.8 on the *Status of Document Production for the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties*, which comprised a provisional list of documents mandated either by the legal text of the Agreement or by previous sessions of the MOP. This list had been compiled to give an overview of the substantial funding gaps, particularly in the case of the reports which inform the entire implementation process. Some of the priority documents in danger of being cancelled if funding could not be secured by the end of March 2017, were, in particular, the 7th edition of the *Report on the Conservation Status*

of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area (Conservation Status Report - CSR7), the Draft Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027, and the Analysis of AEWA National Reports for the Triennium 2015-2017, the conclusions and recommendations of which fed into the decision-making process of the MOP.

51. Other documents, such as revised versions of a series of AEWA Conservation Guidelines were on the TC work plan, however due to the huge withdrawal of capacity and austerity measures in countries, the TC members might not be able to allocate the time necessary to accomplish this work, despite their commitment.

52. Mr Størkersen stressed the importance of being strategic when prioritising. In his view the finalisation of the 1st Site Network Review was the most important item. He confirmed that Norway would make efforts to provide support.

53. On behalf of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the Regional Officer for Africa, Mr Rasamoelina Rakotomamonjy noted that the Draft AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 and the Draft Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027 were important for collaboration, particularly with the Ramsar Focal Points in Africa. It would be useful to present these to the Ramsar Standing Committee.

54. Mr Hlaváček commented that because of its relevance for the Parties, the *Analysis of AEWA National Reports* should be incorporated in the AEWA core budget.

55. The Chair stressed that the Parties to the Agreement should be providing for the mandatory reports which were an essential and basic process informing the entire implementation process. The costs should ideally be incorporated in the core budget; however, the current budget did not cover any of the relevant costs. He strongly urged the Parties to provide voluntary contributions to support the development of the most critical documents so that they can be commissioned in time for MOP7 in order to meet the minimal obligations of the treaty.

<p><i>Actions</i></p>	<p><i>On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat should strongly urge the Parties to pledge support towards the production of the priority mandatory documents by the end of March 2017, to enable them to be commissioned in time for MOP7 and to keep the StC informed of the outcome.</i></p> <p><i>The Technical Committee is requested to continue with efforts to deliver the documents which are part of the TC Work Plan 2016-2018.</i></p>
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Agenda item 6. Implementation of the Recommendations of the Standing Committee Report to MOP6 on the Progress of implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017

56. Mr Dereliev briefly introduced the recommendations for advancing the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan of document AEWA/StC Inf. 12.4 - AEWA/MOP 6.12, pages 12 and 13, requesting guidance on how to proceed with these recommendations, the main responsibility for which was with the Parties.

57. On behalf of BirdLife International, Ms Nicola Crockford referred to [Aichi Target 12](#) (*to prevent the extinction of known threatened species and improve and sustain their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, by 2020*) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and that the CMS family is the most effective way of helping Parties to deliver against that target. She suggested that the initiative ‘Friends of Aichi Target 12’, which comprises 21 partners and was launched by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in May 2013 to help Parties implement Aichi Target 12, could be followed up on for AEWA purposes.

58. Mr Hlaváček informed the Meeting about two decisions made by the [13th CBD COP](#) in December 2016; decision 13/21 which invited the [Global Environment Facility \(GEF\)](#) and its implementing agencies to

facilitate the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12 and other related targets and decision 13/23 which outlined how the implementation of Aichi targets could be supported.

59. Responding to BirdLife's observation, Mr Chambers reported on the compendium guide to the [Strategic Plan for Migratory Species \(2015-2023\)](#) which made direct links to the SDGs. He stressed the need for more effective communication measures to reach out and explain how CMS and AEWA were directly linked towards delivering goals against the SDGs. He referred to document [AEWA/StC10/DR15](#), compiled by Mr David Stroud (Chair of the AEWA Technical Committee at that time) on the *Update on AEWA's Contribution to Delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets*, which simultaneously made the linkages to the SDGs and the need to exploit this further. The CBD COP had opened the [National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans \(NBSAPs\)](#) for the addition of further chapters, which could also be exploited in this context.

60. Mr Trouvilliez reported that one of the priority tasks of the joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising (IMCA) Unit was to develop fact sheets and thematic webpages on AEWA's contribution to the Aichi and SDG targets. He added that efforts would be made to increase communication with regard to mandatory actions by regularly highlighting certain issues.

61. The Chair summarised that adding AEWA issues to NBSAPs could indeed have a significant potential and that communication to Parties needed to be improved, particularly in connection with their legally binding obligations.

62. Mr Nagy added that '*conservation without money is only conversation*' and stressed the importance of communication in that context and increasing efforts with regard to fundraising in order to support countries to enhance their implementation.

Agenda item 7. African Initiative for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in Africa

63. Mr Trouvilliez presented document AEWA/StC 12.9 *Report on the Implementation of the AEWA African Initiative November 2015 – December 2016*.

64. The African Initiative had been launched in 2009 and, in accordance with Resolution 5.9, the Coordination Unit within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Sub-Regional Focal Point Coordinators (SRFPC) had been established. The SRFPCs were supported by the Technical Support Unit (TSU), offered by the Governments of France and Senegal. The First Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA), approved at MOP5 in 2012, provided an operational guideline for the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, translating the objectives of the AEWA Strategic Plan into tangible results in the African region, over the period of 2012-2017.

65. Resolution 6.14 extended the period of implementation of both the AEWA Strategic Plan and AEWA PoAA until 2018, taking into account that the AEWA MOP7 was scheduled to take place in 2018. The same resolution also requested the development of drafts for both plans for the period of 2019-2027, to be submitted to the AEWA MOP7 for consideration and adoption. The concept note for the PoAA 2019-2027 had been developed and approved by the StC in November 2016, however the necessary funding had still not been secured.

66. He went on to report on some of the activities under the PoAA during the reporting period, including the waterbird database management workshop for Anglophone Contracting Parties in Africa held in Senegal in October 2016. It was organised by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with Wetlands International and the Technical Support Unit (TSU) for the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, which provided the facilitation and training for this workshop. Support for the local logistical organisation was provided by Wetlands International Africa. The workshop was made possible thanks to the financial support from the Government of Switzerland, which had also supported the translation of the AEWA text into Portuguese to

promote the accession of the remaining four Portuguese-speaking Range States and a national multi-stakeholder workshop to promote the accession of Cameroon to AEWA.

67. The AEWA Small Grants Fund launched in 2010 had focused on the African region and the 2015 project cycle was currently underway with 11 projects eligible; these had been pre-assessed by the Secretariat and would be submitted to the AEWA TC and StC for consideration and approval.

The Chair thanked all the countries and institutions which had supported the African Initiative and thus the implementation of AEWA in Africa. He strongly urged countries to support the completion of the PoAA 2019-2027, which was directly linked to the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027.

Agenda item 8. Development of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 and AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027

68. Mr Dereliev gave a short overview of the status of the development of the AEWA Strategic Plan and AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027, which were closely linked. The AEWA Strategic Plan was the first process and the Secretariat had managed to secure the necessary funds to launch this process immediately after MOP6. The Strategic Plan Working Group meeting had taken place in June 2016 and the first draft was almost ready for translation and for consultation with Parties. This was a high quality, specific and targeted document to guide the work of the Agreement. The next step would be to align the revised PoAA to the Strategic Plan. The Working Group for this purpose was being set up. The meeting of the Working Group was tentatively being convened for September 2017, resources allowing.

69. Answering a question from France on the necessity for the development of a new PoAA if the targets had not changed significantly, Mr Dereliev explained that the PoAA had to be directly linked to the AEWA Strategic Plan, which was currently being renewed. There would be a continuity of actions but there was definitely added value in convening a working group and working together towards aligning the two documents.

70. The Chair added that the MOP had given the Secretariat the mandate to do this work and that fundraising efforts should be strengthened to this end.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Fundraising should continue towards the development of the PoAA 2019-2027 and depending on the outcome, the Standing Committee would decide at the end of March as to how to proceed.</i>
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Agenda item 9. Implementation Review Process (IRP)

71. Mr Dereliev explained that the Standing Committee had been entrusted with the task of the IRP at MOP4 in 2008 and since then several cases had been opened. He went on by reporting on the last opened IRP case, which had been based on a submission by the BirdLife Partner in Iceland because of the possible impact of Icelandic forestry policy on migratory waterbirds. The Icelandic Government had agreed to an on-the-spot-assessment mission with the inclusion of the Bern Convention, but excluded the Ramsar Convention and the organisation for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), which had been originally planned. Thus the two frameworks undertook the mission in May 2016 with a number of stakeholders and experts, which was very productive; the comprehensive and detailed [mission report](#) is available on the AEWA website.

72. The Bern Convention Standing Committee adopted a new Recommendation, superseding the one from 2002 on the same subject, which almost entirely followed the recommendations produced by the mission. The Secretariat suggested that the Standing Committee issues the same set of recommendations as the Bern

Convention (at its 36th Standing Committee Meeting in November 2016: [document AEW/STC Inf. 12.1](#) – Bern Recommendation 190/2016).

73. France highlighted this excellent example of how two MEAs could collaborate on this type of issue.

74. Representing the Bern Secretariat, Ms Iva Obretanova expressed her pleasure to have been able to attend an AEW/STC Meeting for the first time. She expressed her gratitude to the UNEP/AEW/STC Secretariat for initiating this joint assessment mission and also to the two consultants commissioned for that purpose. The Bern Convention StC, where Iceland had also been represented, had adopted the recommendations. Since then the Bern Convention had been in contact with the Icelandic Ministry of the Environment in the context of the [Emerald Network](#), which is an ecological network made up of Areas of Special Conservation Interest launched by the Council of Europe as part of its work under the Bern Convention in 1989.

<i>Decision:</i>	<i>The Meeting adopted the set of recommendations laid down in the mission report and already adopted by the Bern Convention StC36 in Bern Recommendation No. 190 (2016).</i>
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75. He went on to report on the case opened in Bulgaria in 2012 with regard to a windfarming project adjacent to Lake Durankulak putting at risk the globally threatened Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), 90% of the population of which concentrated there in winter. The case had a long history including a series of court cases and appeals, thus a mission had not been accepted to date. An up-dated report had arrived on the day before the StC Meeting, where the Ministry of Environment had informed that all legislative options had been exhausted with no further possibility to improve the situation. Since there was nothing more that the UNEP/AEW/STC Secretariat could do, the Secretariat suggested that the StC approach the European Commission as representative of the EU, which was a Party to AEW/STC. Legislation under the Birds Directive could enable the Commission to open a case under an infringement procedure. In parallel, the case could be extended to address in general the windfarm planning procedures and SEA/EIA standards in Bulgaria.

76. Dealing with windfarms on a case-by-case basis was not effective (he mentioned another windfarming case in Bulgaria, which had been ongoing for 10 years). If AEW/STC were to join forces with the Bern Convention and send a joint enquiry to Bulgaria as to the strategic approach, the necessary safeguards could be put into place to avoid clashing with biodiversity priorities. It may make more sense here for AEW/STC to look into the broader picture; there were ca. 5,000 wind turbine permits issued in the Dobrudja region alone, where Lake Durankulak is situated, which if the trend were to continue, would certainly lead to this primary wintering area becoming inaccessible for AEW/STC-listed species.

77. On behalf of the Netherlands, Ms Remmelts noted that windfarms had to be dealt with on a location basis and that a general view would be difficult; she suggested communicating with the European Commission first on this. Norway supported the referral of the case to the European Commission.

78. Responding to a question with regard to the CMS Task Force on Renewable Energies, Mr Dereliev explained that Bulgaria had been invited to join the Task Force and that the goal of the Task Force was to help countries towards attaining a long-term sustainable approach to renewable energy developments, rather than to deal with individual problematic cases.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Secretariat should explore the possibility of extending this case to the European Commission following their process. If this approach proved unsuccessful, then it would be reviewed again by the StC.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat will contact the European Commission to discuss the extension of this case to the EC process.</i>

79. Mr Dereliev went on to report on the status of the mission relating to the drainage of the salina of Ulcinj in Montenegro for tourism development, explaining that this was the most important wetland along the Adriatic coast. Since this case had been opened in 2012, communication had proved to be difficult and in March 2015, the Secretariat requested an appointment in Podgorica in the margins of another meeting in April 2015 attended by a representative of the Secretariat. This international meeting on the conservation of the salina of Ulcinj took place on 8-9 April 2015 in Podgorica and was convened by the Montenegrin Centre for the Protection and Study of Birds and the German NGO EuroNatur, in cooperation with the Municipality of Ulcinj. A representative of the Secretariat met with officials of the Ministry on 7 April 2015 and it was agreed that the outcomes of the international meeting would be considered in the follow up work on the IRP case. The Secretariat had only just received a report a few hours earlier and would get back to the StC with feedback on the case, once the report had been examined.

80. Suggestions were made to liaise with the Ramsar and Barcelona Conventions on this issue and make use of potential synergies, if possible.

<i>Decision and action</i>	<i>The Secretariat should continue to monitor the case in Montenegro, while working with the Ramsar and Barcelona Conventions and advise the StC on the outcome.</i>
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81. Mr Dereliev reported that the case on the illegal hunting of critically endangered Sociable Lapwing in Syria was on hold.

82. France reported on the watching brief in the case of the windfarm to be built on Eurasian Crane habitat in the South West of France. A new SEA had been requested but showed very little change. It was currently being blocked for military reasons and a tribunal decision was still pending. France would monitor the situation and inform the Secretariat and the Standing Committee if there were any inter-sessional changes.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Syrian case should be kept on hold. The French windfarm case should remain as a watching brief and France would keep the Secretariat and the Standing Committee informed.</i>
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Agenda item 10. Outputs of the Technical Committee Work Plan 2016-2018

a. Waterbird population delineation

83. Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/StC 12.11 whereby the TC had been requested by MOP6 to consider the delineation of population boundaries for selected species (see AEWA/StC 12.12. Rev.1). As part of undertaking this task, the TC identified the need to further elaborate the existing ‘Guidance of Biographical Populations of Waterbirds’ adopted at MOP3. The proposed treatment of population changes of AEWA species under varying circumstances, e.g. translocation or various types of re-establishment had been identified. This guidance would be revised by the TC in case of any new emerging situations and presented to MOP7.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The General Guidance on the Definition of Species Populations under AEWA (document AEWA/StC 12.11) was adopted by the Meeting.</i>
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84. Mr Dereliev went on to give a brief introduction on document AEWA StC 12.12 Rev. 1 *Technical Committee Recommendations for the Delineation of Selected AEWA Populations on Table 1 of the Action Plan*. This work had also been conducted in the framework of the TC work plan 2016-2018. The document presented evidence supporting the delineation of current population boundaries for five species. In the case of the Common Murre, part of the range (the western Atlantic breeding birds) would no longer be covered by the Agreement and in the case of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, the TC had come to the conclusion that the

current AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the species, as adopted in 2008, treated the two populations correctly as separate biogeographical populations.

85. Further delineations would be produced for the Tern species listed and also for the Eurasian Spoonbill where the expert working group would fill out and submit the TC-approved form for change in population delineation due to a possible split in the populations. It was suggested that these be presented to the StC intersessionally for approval, once finalised.

86. On behalf of the EU, Mr Lamarque reported that concerning the two populations of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, the EU had no objections to treating the two populations as separate biogeographic populations, but would not agree if the Swedish population was approved as being artificial.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Meeting approved the delineation of the selected populations as laid down by the TC in document AEWA/StC 12.12 rev.1. The TC would continue to work on the delineation of the Tern populations and the Eurasian Spoonbill and would contact the StC intersessionally for approval.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat will submit the delineation of the Tern species and Eurasian Spoonbill to the Standing Committee intersessionally for approval.</i>

b. Species action and management plans

87. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce document AEWA/StC 12.3 *TC Recommendation on the Prolongation, Revision and Retirement of AEWA SSAPs*, explaining that the TC could not complete this assessment in time for this Meeting and would need to deliberate further on some of the species, thus the document represented an initial overview, containing preliminary recommendations only for the information of the StC.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Meeting took note of the progress made regarding the assessment of the prolongation, revision and retirement of select AEWA International Single Species Action Plans, including the preliminary recommendations of the Technical Committee and would review and approve the recommended treatment of the select AEWA International Single Species Action Plans, via correspondence, on a temporary basis, subject to the final approval by MOP7.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat will provide the StC with the recommended treatment of the select AEWA ISSAPs for temporary approval.</i>

88. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque reported that Germany welcomed the suggestion for retirement, maintenance and revision of ISSAPs as presented in document AEWA/StC 12.13. In particular, Germany welcomed the recent EU coordination meeting on the revision of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose ISSAP, which should provide a good basis to ensure that the revision will be carried out in accordance with the EU Birds Directive.

89. Presenting document AEWA/StC 12.14 Rev.1 *Revised Format for AEWA International Action, Management and Multi-species Plans*, Mr Dereliev explained that the request to revise the ISSAP format currently in use, which had been adopted at MOP4 in 2008, was part of the recommendations adopted at MOP6 in 2015. The revision process was being led by Wetlands international under the auspices of the TC. The order of the different sections of the Action Plans had basically been rearranged to make them more user-friendly for policy-makers and implementing agencies. Since a number of ISSAPs were being prepared for approval at MOP7, it would be important to already start using the revised and improved format.

90. Speaking on behalf of the EU, Mr Lamarque reported that the EU had some practical suggestions for re-ordering the format, which he would forward to the Secretariat.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Meeting provisionally approved the format presented in document AEWA/StC 12.14 Rev.1 for use until MOP7 approved the final format (with inclusion of the EU suggestions).</i>
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c. Conservation guideline format

91. Mr Dereliev presented document AEWA/StC 12.15 *Revised Format for AEWA Conservation Guidelines*. MOP5 had requested the Technical Committee (TC), in Resolution 5.10, to undertake a critical review of the style and format of AEWA’s Conservation Guidelines. Such a review had been undertaken by the Technical Committee during the course of 2015. At MOP6 in November 2015, the Parties had requested the Technical Committee to complete this review and to make recommendations intersessionally to the Standing Committee on both the style and subject matter of future Guidelines (Resolution 6.5). The review of AEWA’s Conservation Guidelines: Format and Future Priorities had been presented to the 13th Meeting of the Technical Committee, which took place on the 14-17 March 2016 in Israel. The enclosed recommendations regarding the revision of the format for AEWA Conservation Guidelines were based on the outcomes of the review.

92. The main elements of the revised format would be a simple **Conservation Guidance Briefing Note** of maximum two pages in length, which would facilitate translation of such briefings into a range of other languages at low cost and a more detailed **Conservation Guidance Background Document** of maximum.25 pages in length. Any further background information would be presented or published in separate format (and linked).

93. The TC Chair, Mr Saulius Svazas referred to the review and the valuable feedback from Parties, showing how they actually used the guidelines. He expressed his gratitude to Mr David Stroud for dealing with this review and subsequent analysis, which had led to this extremely well-prepared document. He recommended that the StC approve the document.

94. Mr Lamarque also welcomed the simplified format and all the effort made in the revision procedure.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Meeting approved the Revised Format for AEWA Conservation Guidelines, as presented in document AEWA/StC 12.15.</i>
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Agenda item 11. New Arabic Translation of the Agreement Text

95. Mr Trouvilliez presented the status of the Arabic translation of the Agreement text, which was now available (see document AEWA/StC Inf. 12.10), recalling that MOP5 had entrusted approval of the new Arabic translation of the Agreement text to the AEWA Standing Committee. A translation had been prepared and circulated to Parties, but had not been adopted following concerns raised by the Netherlands in its capacity as Depositary for the Agreement. The Government of the Netherlands had offered its translation service to complete preparation of the text. The importance of having an Arabic version of the Agreement text as soon as possible was a key means of facilitating accession to the Agreement by Arabic-speaking Range States.

96. According to Resolution 6.2, the Secretariat was requested to circulate the final draft to Arabic-speaking Parties for clearance and the Standing Committee was mandated to approve the finalized translation.

97. On behalf of Libya, Mr Essam Bouras remarked that some minor adjustments to the format were necessary, which he offered to carry out within the next few days.

<i>Decision and Action</i>	<p><i>After the initial formatting amendments, to be carried out by the StC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa, Mr Essam Bouras, the Secretariat will circulate the new draft Arabic version of the Agreement text to the Arabic speaking Contracting Parties and selected non-Party Range States for comments.</i></p> <p><i>The Secretariat will subsequently forward the Arabic version of the Agreement text to the Standing Committee members for approval and further transmission to the Depository for notification to the Parties.</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>The Secretariat will circulate the new draft Arabic version of the Agreement text to the Arabic-speaking countries and selected non-Party Range States for comments.</i></p>

98. Mr Trouvilliez went on to report that the Portuguese translation of the Agreement Text would be delivered in the coming days and that Mr Lamarque had kindly agreed to check the translation.

Agenda item 12. Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit

99. Mr Trouvilliez presented document AEWA/StC 12.16. *Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising (IMCA) Unit*, which gave an overview of the institutional arrangements and activities throughout the period November 2015 to December 2016. He reported that the IMCA Plan of Work for 2017 had been compiled and that an important aspect had been to ensure that the service is distributed appropriately between the two Secretariats and to improve efficiency in the long run.

100. Priority tasks included raising the impact of the website and producing tools, such as generic PPTs, in particular for the use of national Focal Points. The World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign had been a great success in 2016 and preparations for the 2017 campaign were well underway: the slogan for 2017 was aligned to the CMS COP12 slogan *Their Future is Our Future* and the campaign would focus on highlighting the links between sustainable development and the protection of the environment globally.

101. On behalf of France, Mr Lamarque welcomed this first synergies-related step within the CMS family, enquiring whether it could also involve the UNEP/EUROBATS Secretariat. He noted that many of the French pages on the website were not entirely accurate.

102. Mr Nagy noted with appreciation, the quick action on behalf of the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit, as well as the IMCA Unit with regard to the recent appeal launched to support the emergency monitoring of waterbirds, due to the cold weather spell in South Eastern Europe, whereby the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat had called upon national authorities and hunting associations to try to minimize the disturbance and to apply emergency measures, such as the temporary suspension of waterbird hunting in the affected countries.

103. Ms Rimmelts reported that the Netherlands were in favour of more synergies and welcomed this first step. Referring to the lengthy discussions at MOP6, where many European countries had requested more cost-effectiveness in the context of synergies, she noted that savings had not been mentioned in the report. The Netherlands would like to see more information on that aspect of this common service in future.

104. Mr Chambers responded that he was aware that cost-efficiency had always been a priority with the Parties, however the idea here was to deliver more value and further services for the same amount of money, rather than reducing costs.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Meeting noted the report with appreciation and fully supported the continuation of the pilot.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>Future reports by the Secretariat to the Standing Committee should follow the request of Resolution 6.22 to report on cost savings.</i>

Agenda item 13. Financial and Administrative Matters

a. Execution of the 2013-2015 and 2016-2018 budgets

105. Mr Trouvilliez apologised for the late delivery of document AEWA/StC 12.17 *Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative Issues*, due to the heavy workload of the Administrative and Fund Management Unit. The report gave an overview of core budget income and expenditure, as well as an overview of voluntary contributions received between November 2015 and December 2016.

106. On behalf of the joint CMS family Administration and Fund Management Officer, Ms Sandra Rücker also apologised for the delay in finalising the report, which covered the year of transition to Umoja. The implementation rate of the budget was at 95%; a large part of the budget went towards salaries and meetings. The 146,000 EUR overexpenditure relating to the organisation of MOP6, would reduce, as soon as an ongoing expenditure reversal into voluntary contributions had been approved.

107. With regard to salary costs, which were calculated according to standard salary costs, the overexpenditures for some positions were compensated by underexpenditures for others. The 2016 accounts were still not final as accounting entries would continue being made until 31 January.

108. Mr Trouvilliez thanked the Administration and Fund Management Unit for all the efforts made. The situation had improved somewhat since the transition period to Umoja in June 2015, however some challenges remained. He noted that the IT costs should be reduced by 20-25% for 2017 and he hoped that telephone costs could also be reduced due to a new provider. He noted that in the next report, the Umoja budget format would be used, whereby the individual staff costs would be aggregated into one budget line. A revised version of the report could be forwarded to the Standing Committee once all the pending reversals had been carried out.

109. In 2015, the year of MOP6, many countries had provided funds towards the MOP, but also for other purposes; he thanked the Governments of Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden and Israel for their generous contributions.

110. Mr Lamarque enquired about the substantial overexpenditure with regard to telephone costs. There were many ways to decrease these such as the use of Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook etc. With regard to voluntary contributions, he enquired about possibly mentioning contributions which had not passed through the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, such as the French contribution to the African Initiative through the Technical Support Unit (TSU).

111. Responding, Mr Trouvilliez reported that efforts were ongoing to renegotiate the provider contract for the whole CMS family for mobile phones. This entailed a lengthy procurement procedure, which should be finalised within the next few months. With regard to country contributions which did not go through the Secretariat, this could be looked into with the help of UNEP.

112. The Chair expressed the gratitude of the Standing Committee to all countries and organisations providing support towards AEWA, also those providing support towards AEWA activities through other channels.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Meeting took note of the report and expected to receive an updated version once all the necessary reversals had been carried out.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat will prepare an up-dated version of the report and forward this to the StC intersessionally.</i>

b. Administrative and personnel matters

113. Mr Trouvilliez referred to document AEWA/StC 12.17, which briefly referred to the ongoing recruitment of the P-2 Associate Programme Officer for the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP), while the job opening of the G-5 Programme Management Assistant, also for the EGMP was still being processed. The three existing G-4 positions had all been re-classified at G-5 level and the respective job openings were being processed.

114. For more details on the staffing and organisation of the Secretariat, please see document UNEP/AEWA StC 12.5).

c. Status of AEWA contributions in arrears

115. Mr Trouvilliez presented the Secretariat's proposal to improve the payments of the mandatory contributions and to reduce the amount of arrears (document StC 12.18 Corr. 1), explaining that efforts were being made to follow up on pending payments and that this had become increasingly relevant due to Umoja regulations and payment modalities. The Secretariat was concerned, particularly by the big deficits and was ready to provide any assistance required by national Focal Points. Since the move to IPSAS and its strict liquidity regime, the Secretariat could run into cash-flow problems, if debts were not recovered.

116. The Secretariat proposed publishing the status of the contributions, which will show the list of countries with arrears, on the AEWA website. The status of the contributions would be updated regularly as was the practice with other MEAs. Some of the national Focal Points were making efforts to solve arrears, so this overview could serve to help them see what the current status was.

117. In his capacity as StC Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, Mr Lamarque suggested that the Regional Representatives help with communicating arrears to the relevant Focal Points, in order to help the Secretariat to recover the contributions.

118. Referring to the proposal made by the Secretariat in document AEWA/StC 12.8 Corr. 1, the Chair noted that appropriate actions for facilitating payment in the case of Parties with outstanding contributions of more than three years could be considered and requested the Secretariat to make a proposal for consideration at MOP7.

119. This proposal was supported by the Netherlands, France and Libya.

120. Mr Trouvilliez said he would report back to the next Standing Committee Meeting with a proposal for the most appropriate actions to reduce the amount of arrears. He noted that some countries had obvious difficulties with payment and that the Secretariat was working closely with UNEP on this issue.

<i>Decisions and Actions</i>	
	<i>- The Secretariat should forward invoices to the relevant national Focal Points for follow-up</i>
	<i>- The Secretariat should publish and regularly update the status of the contributions and the arrears on the AEWA website</i>

d. AEWA scale of contributions for 2019-2021

121. Mr Trouvilliez presented document AEWA/StC 12.19 *Report of the Secretariat on the Scale used to Determine Annual Contributions by the Contracting Parties to the AEWA Core Budget*, explaining that MOP6 had requested the development of a series of budget scenarios for presentation to MOP7 and to describe any differences between the UN Scale of Assessments and the scale used to determine contributions to AEWA. This document aimed to provide an overview of the history of the calculation of the contributions to AEWA since MOP1 in 1999.

122. The [UN scale of assessments](#) reflected the state of economies, as well as other criteria and was used by most global treaties. A change to the UN scale of assessment would mean that some countries would have to pay more and some less, in comparison with what they are currently paying. The potential changes between contributions according to the current UN scale and those approved by MOP6 were presented in Annex 2 of the report. Because a change to the UN scale of assessments would mean a considerable increase for some Parties, a transitional period would have to be established to enable them to raise the level of their contributions in steps.

123. A number of points would need to be decided on: The question of the minimum contribution, the amount of the EU contribution and the maximum threshold. Also, the question of a transitional period for countries with substantial increases would need to be decided on and whether this issue should be brought to MOP7 in the form of a draft resolution.

124. The Chair recommended moving to the UN scale of assessments, in order to align the scale used with other MEASs, with the incorporation of a transitional period.

125. On behalf of Belgium, Mr Lamarque referred to Resolution 6.18, stressing the importance of having a more transparent scale of contributions at MOP7.

126. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque reported that Germany supported budget transparency and the UN scale of assessments. Germany was in favour of first discussing with relevant countries on whether to return to the UN scale or to continue paying the current minimum contribution (2,000 EUR) or to increase the minimum contribution to 3,000 EUR. Germany would advocate a return to a 2,5% EU contribution in the framework of the EU coordination. The maximum threshold should remain at 20% and a transitional period for countries with large increases should be established.

127. France was in favour of a minimum contribution of either 2,000 EUR or 3,000 EUR, an EU contribution of 2.5% and a maximum threshold of 20 %. A transitional period should be established to prepare a future move towards the application of the UN scale of assessments. The position of France at MOP7 would be to go for the zero-nominal growth scenario, i.e. no increase in the budget.

128. On behalf of the Netherlands, Ms Rimmelts concurred that the Netherlands were in line with Germany and France and that the position of the Netherlands would also be to go for zero nominal growth at MOP7. The Netherlands were in favour of synergies within the CMS family and applying the same scale of assessments would be a good way forward.

129. Mr Størkersen stressed the need to take care when explaining the reasons for the change to the UN scale, which will mean an increase in the case of some countries, thus the zero-growth scenario would not be a possible option. The contributions of new Parties could be used to offset the costs of funded delegates, as in the past.

130. Mr Trouvilliez concluded that he would have consultations with relevant countries and draft new scenarios for the next meeting of the Standing Committee. The UN scale would be applied in the case of any new Parties; these contributions would go into the Trust Fund, or be used for funded delegates.

131. On behalf of Uganda, the Chair advocated for implementation of article 5.2a of AEWA and the gradual move towards the UN scale of assessments.

<i>Decisions</i>	<i>In connection with the scale of contributions and in preparation for the scenarios for presentation to MOP7, the Meeting decided on the following:</i>
	<i>- To keep the minimum contribution at 2,000 EUR;</i>
	<i>- To fix the EU contribution at the original 2,5%;</i>
	<i>- To retain the maximum threshold at 20%;</i>
	<i>- To return to the UN scale of assessments while implementing a gradual transitional Period consisting of two MOP cycles (six years); and</i>
	<i>- To direct contributions from new Parties into the AEWA Trust Fund.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat will approach countries where a high increase in the annual contribution is expected under the UN scale of assessments, to discuss the possible option of a step-by-step increase within the transitional period.</i>

Agenda item 14. Outcome of the Analysis of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the Standing Committee

132. Mr Trouvilliez introduced document AEWA/StC 12.20 on the *Analysis of Resolution 2.6, 2. (F) and Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure of the AEWA Standing Committee*, explaining that there was a contradiction in the two documents with regard to the reappointment of Standing Committee Members after expiration of their term of office. The issue had been discussed at MOP6 and the subsequent 11th Meeting of the Standing Committee, which had requested the Secretariat to undertake an analysis of the Rules of Procedure.

133. The document provided an overview of the historical background, outlining the contradiction and concluded that ‘*term of office*’ is used differently in Resolution 2.6 (two MOP cycles) and Rule 17 of the Standing Committee Rules of Procedure (one MOP cycle).

134. Throughout the meeting history, the Standing Committee membership had been understood as lasting two MOP cycles until MOP6 where the re-appointment of Standing Committee members was controversially discussed and Standing Committee members were reappointed.

135. The Modus Operandi of the AEWA Technical Committee, adopted by MOP4, foresaw a term of office longer than two MOP cycles, if the term was extended by agreement of the Meeting of the Parties. A similar regulation could be introduced with respect to the Standing Committee. The options were discussed and it was decided that the Secretariat should work closely with UNEP towards aligning the Rules of Procedure to those of the CMS StC and other MEAs.

136. Mr Trouvilliez pointed out that it was sometimes difficult to find suitable regional representatives and that the minimum office should be six years.

137. Various options were discussed, such as 3 + 3 years, 6 + 3 years and 6 + 6 years and also whether the Rules of Procedure should be approved by the MOP to give them more weight (although this would imply that they could not be amended intersessionally). The wording in the resolution should be simplified. It was also

suggested that candidates could only be reappointed after a six-year term by consensus and by their respective regions

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Meeting amended the StC Rules of Procedure to align them with Resolution 2.6 and decided that the Secretariat should continue consultations on the issue of tenure of office for Standing Committee Members (also with UNEP), in order to be able to present an appropriate draft resolution to the next StC Meeting before MOP7.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>Mr Jiří Hlaváček would provide the Secretariat with a table comparing the relevant Rules of Procedure of other MEA Standing Committees, in order to help with the alignment of Rule 17.</i>

Agenda item 15. Date and Venue of the 13th Meeting of the Standing Committee (StC13)

138. Mr Trouvilliez reported that MOP7 was tentatively scheduled for November 2018, thus the next Meeting of the Standing Committee could take place in the last week of June or the first week of July 2018 to allow time for the finalisation of MOP7 documents.

139. As Chair of the Technical Committee, Mr Svazas proposed the later dates, i.e. early July, to allow the Technical Committee as much time as possible for the finalisation of tasks and documents.

140. On behalf of the Netherlands, Ms Remmelts confirmed that the proposed period was fine and that she would look into the possibility of the Netherlands hosting the 13th Meeting of the Standing Committee and would inform the Secretariat accordingly.

141. The Chair thanked the Netherlands for considering to host StC13 and confirmed that the tentative dates for StC13 were early July.

Agenda item 16. Any Other Business

142. In his capacity as Chair of the CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group (AEMLWG), Mr Olivier Biber informed the Meeting of the [CMS Workshop on Land Use Policies and Their Effects on Migratory Landbirds in West Africa](#), which took place in Nigeria in November 2016 and had been attended by government representatives and experts from international organisations dealing with land use change. Amongst the different key land-use changes, the loss and degradation of wetlands had also been identified and he suggested that the momentum from that workshop could serve as a basis for synergies between the AEMLWG, AEWa and the Raptors MOU.

143. Referring to the FAO and FFEM RESSOURCE Project, Ms Crockford suggested examining the scope for synergies between that project and the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan.

144. On behalf of UNEP, Mr Jiří Hlaváček recommended sharing the results of the Nigeria Workshop with the President of the [African Ministerial Conference on Environment](#) (AMCEN), the next meeting of which was scheduled to take place in April and also with the President of UNEA, which had adopted a resolution on last session on combating desertification, land degradation and drought and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands (2/24); he would provide the relevant contact details to the Secretariat. He also suggested contacting the [Convention to Combat Desertification](#) (UNCCD) in that context, which was also based in Bonn, Germany.

Agenda item 17. Closure of the Meeting

145. The Chair declared that the targets of the meeting had been met and thanked the delegates for the very constructive views and discussions. He also thanked the Government of France for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements for the meeting which had contributed to its success.

146. Mr Trouvilliez thanked the StC Members and Observers for their contribution to this very fruitful meeting and all the good advice given. The atmosphere had been good and positive throughout, which illustrated the AEWA spirit. He went on to thank all the Secretariat staff, particularly Mr Sergey Dereliev and Ms Jolanta Kremer, and all the others who had contributed to both the substantial and logistical organisation of the Meeting, as well as Administration and Fund Management Officer, Ms Sandra Rücker for attending and supporting the Secretariat. He thanked Mr Barirega Akankwasah for being such an effective and professional chair and last-but-not-least, he thanked France for hosting the meeting and for the excellent arrangements.

147. There was still much to do and following the advice given by the Standing Committee, the Secretariat would examine the suggestions made and carry out the necessary consultations in preparation for the next Meeting of the Standing Committee, which would be the last meeting before MOP7.

148. Representing MEEM, Mr Christian Le Coz declared that it had been a personal pleasure to welcome the StC Members and Observers to Paris, also on behalf of Mr Lamarque. He congratulated the Meeting for all the hard and effective work, which had contributed to the success of the Meeting.

149. With that, the meeting was closed.

APPENDIX 1 – StC 12 Participants List

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