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SECOND MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

2-3 November 2004, Bonn, Germany.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article VIII, paragraph h of the Agreement, the Secretariat shall prepare, on an annual basis and for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, reports on the work of the Secretariat and on the implementation of the Agreement. In addition to this, the Secretariat decided to report back to each meeting of the Technical or Standing Committee. It has been agreed by both Committees that a common report will be produced for both meetings. However, it has also been agreed that, for each meeting, the report will be updated to reflect the actual situation. Depending on the intervals between these meetings, the report could be differ slightly.

The current report describes the period since the 1st Meeting of the Standing Committee, which took place from 23-24 November 2003 in Bonn, Germany.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AEWA SECRETARIAT

Besides the day-to-day work consisting of responding to mail, maintenance of the AEWA network, and dealing with administrative and financial matters, the Secretariat spent a lot of time on more general issues, e.g. on security issues, on the move of the Secretariat to the OBS building and on the move to the new UN Campus in the near future. The latter is quite time-consuming. Regular meetings of the Heads of Agencies take place to discuss issues of common interest with regard to the UN campus.

This report is divided into four parts:

1. General Matters: these include administrative/ financial issues, personnel, future premises, meetings, etc;
2. Information Management: this includes the Newsletter, website, etc;
3. Cooperation with other organisations;
4. Technical and/ or Scientific Matters: these include projects that are contracted out by the Secretariat and/ or projects carried out by others in which the Secretariat is strongly involved.

The day-to-day work will not be covered in this report.

1. GENERAL MATTERS

Future Premises for the Agreement Secretariat

As reported during the StC1 meeting in 2005 all Bonn-based UN agencies will move to the new UN campus. The Agreement Secretariat has negotiated the room requirements, and it is quite satisfied that agreement could be reached with the German Government as well as with the UN agencies on allocation of the

19th floor of the Langer Eugen building for the Agreement Secretariat. The office space available on this floor could also accommodate some expected growth of the Secretariat in the nearby future. As mentioned in the previous report, a special task force of UN representatives has been established to oversee the development of the UN campus. The Executive Secretary of UNEP/ ASCOBANS represents CMS and the co-located Agreements in the task force. Final decisions are made by the Heads of Agencies. Therefore Heads of Agencies meet on a regular basis. As far as possible, the Executive Secretary participated in these meetings. The latest information is that our move to this new UN campus will take place during the second half of 2005.

CMS and the co-located Agreements were facing a short-term lack of office space. Therefore, early in 2004, it was decided that the Agreements Secretariats would move from Haus Castanjen to the so-called OBS building. The actual move took place at the beginning of July. The disruption of our activities caused by the move could be kept to a minimum of only a few working days. However, although the OBS building is located only two kilometres away from Haus Castanjen, it has been noted that we have lost day-to-day contact with CMS, which is regrettable.

Agreements' Unit

Unfortunately, at the end of July 2004, Mr Ephraim Kariuki (Kenyan), an experienced Financial Assistant, left the CMS Admin Unit. It is expected that his position could be filled again in due course. Agreement was reached with CMS that Junior Professional Officer Ms Sandra Ruecker would spend two days a week at OBS. She has temporarily taken over part of Mr. Kariuki's work, and, furthermore, she is facilitating our work as much as possible.

As mentioned in the previous report, UNON has reviewed the administrative support for out-posted offices. This has led to the recommendation that CMS and its Agreements as out-posted office have 1 Administrative and Fund Management Officer, 2 Administrative Assistants and 2 Financial Assistants. The Deputy Executive Director of UNEP agreed that OTL¹ funds might be used to cover the salary costs of three additional staff- 1 Financial Assistant and 2 Administrative Assistants - for this Unit. The recruitment process to fill all these vacancies is in its final stages. Based on the latest information, the last post will be filled as of 1st November 2004. Probably, from that date onwards, most problems with servicing the Agreements will be solved.

Recruitment of Staff

Last year was a very busy year for the Agreement Secretariat. This situation will not change in 2004 due to the fact that AEWA is becoming more and more well-known, which is leading to more requests for information, for support, etc. To enable the Secretariat to do this but also to draft newsletters and prepare meetings and workshops, some temporary staff was recruited on a consultancy basis. In addition, a number of interns joined the Secretariat.

Fixed-term Staff members

The post of Executive Secretary has been reclassified and advertised in accordance with the UN Rules and Regulations. The deadline for application was 23rd December 2003. The interviews have not taken place so far due to the problem that has arisen regarding involvement of the Chair of the Standing Committee in accordance with the annex to Resolution 1.1. At some point in mid-2004 an instruction was received via UNEP from the UN Headquarters in New York that no external persons might participate in the interview panel. The acting Executive Secretary of CMS is doing his utmost to finalise this recruitment process before end of this year.

The recruitment for the post of Associate Technical Officer (P2) as well as for the post of Administrative Assistant (G5) could be finalised by mid-2004, and respectively, Mr Sergey Dereliev (Bulgarian) and Mrs Marie-Therese Kämper were recruited. The latter was already working for the Secretariat and has continued with her activities.

1. OTL stands for Overhead Trust Ledger, which is the 13 % that is deducted by UNEP from all expenses made from the AEWA Budget.

Junior Professional Officer

In August 2004, information was received that the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) request for CMS as well as the one for AEWA were granted priority by the Deputy Executive Secretary of UNEP. Both job descriptions were forwarded by UNEP to the 13 donor countries with the request for support. It is hoped that the two requests will receive financial support and that CMS as well as AEWA will be able to contract a JPO in due course.

Consultants

Ms Ina von Frantzius (German), former intern of CMS, was contracted on a part-time basis for AEWA and also for CMS. The work she did for the Agreement consisted of drafting Newsletter 10 and an Accession Guide for the Agreement. Furthermore, she made contact with nearly all Non-Contracting Parties to urge them to join AEWA and compiled a CD with AEWA reference documents. She worked for the Secretariat from 1st June to 31st July 2004.

On the 1st October 2003 Ms. Yuki Itakura (Japanese), former intern of ASCOBANS, was contracted to assist Ms. Kämper with formatting some MOP2 documents. As of the 1st January 2004, she was working for the ASCOBANS and AEWA Secretariat. She left the Secretariat on the 27th September 2004.

Ms. Bianca Bauch (German), a former AEWA intern, was contracted to support the Administrative Assistant in day-to-day work. In addition, she prepared some substantial documents for TC 5 and made some preparations for the 10th Anniversary of AEWA. She worked for AEWA from the 5th January till the 29th September 2004.

Mr. Florian Keil (German), Consultant of CMS, was contracted on a part-time basis to work for AEWA too. His work comprises revamping the Agreement Website in a manner that the information already available will be better accessible. His contract expires at the end of September 2004.

Interns

Ms Andrea Rechel (German) started to work for the co-located Agreements Secretariats as of the 1st October 2003, and her internship expired on the 31st March 2004. She was particularly involved in financial matter, e.g. in preparing contracts.

Finalisation of MOP2

During 2003, most of the financial matters regarding MOP2 were finalised. A lot of work has been done and is still in progress with regard to finalising the following MOP2 documents:

- Action Plan for the Great Snipe
- Action Plan for the Black-winged Pratincole
- Action Plan for the Sociable Plover
- Guideline on National Legislation
- Guideline on avoidance of introduction of invasive species

Most of these documents are more or less ready to be printed. As soon as funds are secured, printing can take place.

TC meetings

The 5th meeting of the TC (30 March-2 April 2004) was organised back-to-back with the Global Flyway Conference (3-8 April 2004) in Edinburgh, UK. Due to the excellent logistical arrangements made by the UK and the support given to the Secretariat, the TC5 meeting went very smoothly. A full report of this meeting can be found in StC/ Inf. 2.1.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working group

After the working group amended the 4th draft of the Action Plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose, substantial comments were received from some of the key countries or organisations involved. Therefore, the third meeting of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working Group was convened and took place on the 14th January 2004 in Wageningen, The Netherlands. The whole Action Plan was reviewed again and comments received were discussed and, where appropriate, the text was amended. The 6th draft was submitted at some point in June 2004 to the Range States and organisations involved in the species with the request to provide some final comments and remarks. The majority of the Range States have responded ahead of the deadline set, and the Secretariat is doing its utmost to get the last comments in due course. Later on, the final version will be submitted by E-mail to the members of the Technical Committee with the request that they endorse adoption of this Action Plan by the Standing Committee. It is hoped that formal adoption could take place by the StC before the end of 2004.

Light-bellied Brent Goose Action Plan

In early October 2003, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and Queens University Belfast organised an International Workshop at Castle Espie (Northern Ireland) to discuss the production of an International Species Action Plan for the East Canadian High Arctic Light-bellied Brent Goose. The Executive Secretary participated in this meeting and offered to facilitate the work of WWT. By the end of the meeting, it was agreed to develop this Action Plan in the framework of AEWA and to establish a working group linked to the TC. Meanwhile, the first draft has been circulated by the Secretariat to the Range States involved in the conservation of the Species. Formal adoption of the Action Plan is planned to take place at MOP3.

Northern Bald Ibis Workshop

From 8-11 January 2004, a Species Action Plan Stakeholder Workshop on the Northern Bald Ibis took place in Madrid, Spain. This Workshop, funded by AEWA, was organised by SEO, the BirdLife Partner in Spain. The aim of the Workshop was to collect all existing information/ views on the species needed to draft an International Species Action Plan. In mid-2004, the first draft was circulated for comments. The final draft will be submitted to MOP3 for formal adoption.

Corncrake and White-headed Duck Action Plan

The EU contracted out to BirdLife International updating of the existing Species Action Plans for both Species mentioned above. However, this update would only cover the EU countries. The Secretariat reached an agreement with CMS to add for both some additional funds to enable BirdLife International to cover the whole flyway of these species. The Secretariat will submit the final draft of these Action Plans for comments to the Technical Committee and all Range States involved.

Workshop on Sustainable Hunting

In 2002, representatives of Office National de la Chasse et Faune Sauvage (ONCFS) approached the Secretariat regarding a Workshop on Sustainable Hunting in Western Africa. Since then, agreement has been reached with ONCFS, Wetlands International, OMPO, CIC and the Agreement Secretariat that this workshop will be organised under the umbrella of AEWA. The workshop is scheduled to take place from 23-28 October 2004 in Bango, Senegal.

Workshop on promoting AEWA in the Russian Federation

MOP2 adopted the possibility to pay the annual contribution in kind in lieu of cash. This provision has been made to allow countries that are currently in a difficult economic situation to join the Agreement. One of the countries that might be interested in this provision could be the Russian Federation. The annual contribution is one of the bottlenecks in joining any Convention and/ or Agreement, as indicated by the Russian Federation. Now that this problem has been tackled, it might be worthwhile to restart the discussion with the authorities of the Russian Federation on accession to AEWA. Steps are being undertaken to organise a workshop some time during 2005 to promote the Agreement and to encourage the Russian authorities to join AEWA.

2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Communication Strategy

At the 1st Meeting of the Standing Committee, SPAN Consultants presented the result of the quick scan (see doc. TC/ Inf. 5.4.). Based on the outcome of the discussion in the StC as well as on the outcome of a special workshop during the Global Flyway Conference, SPAN Consultants developed the Communication Strategy for the Agreement. This draft Strategy will be discussed at StC2 and later on submitted to MOP3 for adoption.

The following paragraphs provide some more information on existing activities on exchange of information.

Newsletters

Ms Ina von Frantzius compiled the 10th issue of the regular AEWA Newsletter. This Newsletter will be published in due course.

Common Exhibition/ AEWA Exhibition

In the common CMS/ Agreements exhibition, there was limited space to address all aspects of AEWA. Taking into account that the existing AEWA exhibition goes back to the end of 1995 and is completely out of date, there was a need to develop a new one. The development of this exhibition took place in close cooperation with the designer of the common exhibition. The official launch of the AEWA Exhibition took place at the Global Flyway Conference.

Website

The current Agreement's Website is partly maintained by UNEP-WCMC and partly by the Secretariat. The current situation is that information already available at the website is not easily accessible. Therefore Mr. Florian Keil was contracted to re-design the website. Mr Keil has done the same for the CMS Website over the last twelve months or so. Hopefully, the new website can be launched at the second meeting of the StC.

A point of concern will be to maintain the website. This will be one of the tasks for the JPO. Hopefully one of the donor countries will to provide the Secretariat with a JPO.

DVD/ AEWA Film

On the 15th January 2004, the consortium working on the development of the AEWA DVD presented the first results of their work. In particular, the footages shot in Namibia in 2003 are very interesting, showing clearly the pressure of human activities on migratory waterbirds. The official launch of the DVD took place during a plenary session of the Global Flyway Conference. Also for 2004, the voluntary contribution of the German Government has been allocated for further development of the DVD.

3. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Joint work programme with the Ramsar Secretariat

During the Global Flyway Conference, the Joint Work Programme (JWP) between the Secretariats of RAMSAR, CMS and AEWA was signed. It is expected that the first meeting will take place between these Secretariats to discuss the implementation of the JWP before end of 2004.

OMPO

As approved by the Standing Committee during its first meeting, the Secretariat may strengthen cooperation with OMPO. Due to lack of human resources, no progress could be made regarding drafting an Memorandum of Cooperation between both organisations.

4. PROJECTS

African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project

The project brief for the full-size project was submitted to the GEF Secretariat in October 2003. At the GEF Council meeting, which took place from 19-21 November 2003 in Washington, USA, the project was approved. Steps are now being taken by Wetlands International to start the implementation of this project as soon as possible. The approval of the project is also a milestone for the Agreement. Both the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and AEWA will benefit greatly from the implementation of this project. The implementation of the full-size project could probably start in late 2004.

International Implementation Priorities 2004-2007²

The AEWA Secretariat plays an active role in the implementation of the International Implementation Priorities. One of the Secretariat's tasks is to seek and whenever possible to secure necessary funds to implement some of the projects. Unfortunately, 2003/ 2004 were not the best years for fundraising. The economic recession has had an impact on voluntary contributions to the Agreement due to the fact that most of the Ministries of industrialized countries are faced with budget cuts. Luckily, it has been still possible in 2003 and, so far, in 2004 to secure some funds for a number of projects. For an overview of progress made in the implementation of the IIP 2004-2007, see doc. StC 2.11.

²MOP2 adopted the International Implementation Priorities 2004-2007 (IIP 2004-2007). Until then the IIP 2000-2004 was in force; part of the project mentioned above originated from IIP 2000-2004 and part from the new IIP.