

**Speech held by Minister Jürgen Trittin on the occasion of the 10th
Anniversary of AEWA
Monday 4 July 2005, Museum Koenig, Bonn, Germany**

Mr. Lenten,
Professor Wägele,
Mr. Boere,
Mr. Hepworth,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Black Crowned Crane, the Eurasian Oystercatcher, the Common Shelduck, the Ruff and many other birds the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement has been protecting for 10 years are all around us here. Thank you to our host, the "Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig".

The aim of the Agreement of course is the conservation of the species' habitats. So I will start with the first of three pieces of good news: this Agreement has led to a significantly better conservation status of several waterbird species. I am thinking of the Black Stork, the Goosander, the Red-crested Pochard and the Sadwich Tern. This is definitely a reason to celebrate today.

The Dutch government took the initiative to develop the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). Mr Boere, you are the father of AEWA. We would all like to thank you very much and to congratulate you on producing this child.

AEWA was concluded in 1995. Meanwhile, 49 countries in Africa, Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East have officially signed and ratified it. This leads me to today's second piece of good news: the European Parliament will decide on the accession of the European Community to AEWA tomorrow.

All in all, AEWA covers 117 Range States. Migratory birds are traveling birds, they are not interested in frontiers. Protecting them calls for concerted global action. It is not enough if only one country, in which they breed, protects them. All the transit countries and the countries where they overwinter must contribute as well. How could the Red Knot manage the journey from Siberia to its wintering areas in Africa, if cockle-fishing were permitted in the Wadden Sea of East Frisia? The Red Knot, being a light-weight among the migratory birds, needs to eat large numbers of cockles on its journey from Siberia to Africa to get enough energy for a journey of 4,000 km. That is how people in East Frisia contribute to waterbird conservation in Siberia and Africa.

The third piece of good news: at the last Meeting of the Parties I announced that Germany would support the African-Eurasian Flyway Project of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The goal is to develop a network of critical wetland areas on which migratory waterbirds depend throughout the African-Eurasian

flyway. The negotiations on financial support to the tune of 1 Mio € have nearly been concluded, and I assume that the project will be started this year.

Halting the loss of biodiversity was one the most important goals identified at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg. The African-Eurasian Flyway Project is an important contribution to achieving this.

This exhibition at Museum Koenig informs people about this goal, about the contribution of the African-Eurasian Flyway Project and about the importance of AEWA for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. I hope the exhibition will help to mobilize more support for the protection of migratory waterbirds, for example practical commitment from local nature conservation organizations.

I wish all those involved in AEWA and working in its spirit, every success.