

**Welcoming address by Mr. Bert Lenten on the occasion of the 10th  
Anniversary of AEWA  
Monday, 4 July 2005, Museum Koenig, Bonn, Germany**

Professor Dr. Wolfgang Wägele  
Dr. Gerard Boere  
Mr. Robert Hepworth  
Mr. Emmanuelle Severre  
Mr. Yousoof Mungroo  
Mr. Yves Fagniat  
Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement. It is already 10 years ago that this Agreement was concluded in The Hague, The Netherlands. Since then good progress has been made in the implementation of the Agreement. Looking back many achievements could be reported, but unfortunately we do not have the time now to mention each of them. In my view one of the most important achievements is that we raised awareness among policy officers regarding migratory birds and their flyways. They do understand now that for the conservation of migratory species international co-operation at the flyway level is a must. Awareness-raising and education is of great importance for the conservation of species. This is perhaps a nice bridge to introduce Professor Dr. Wägele, the Director of Museum Koenig:

Professor Dr. Wägele has been Director of the museum since 1 October 2004. He studied biology and chemistry and became Professor of Morphology and Systematology of Animals in 1991. During his career he specialized in marine crustaceans. He also concentrated on the biodiversity of the deep sea, did much research in the Antarctic, and became a renowned scientist in this field. He is the one who helped the museum become a 'Centre of Excellence' in the field of systematic zoology. Thank you, Professor Dr. Wägele, for hosting this event in your museum.

Not only awareness-raising and education are important for the conservation of migratory waterbirds; we need also the resources to do the work. In 2000 the Agreement Secretariat moved from the Netherlands to Germany. From the beginning the German Government has supported our work. 2005 is a special year for the UN organizations based in Bonn, including AEWA. We will all move to our new premises in the 'Langer Eugen' by end of this year. The AEWA Secretariat is very pleased with the excellent office facilities we will be getting in this building.

We also have an excellent relationship with the Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. Therefore I am pleased to introduce to you Minister Trittin.

Minister Jürgen Trittin has been a member of the Green Party since 1980 and Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety since 1998. His politics have always concentrated on nature and species conservation in Germany and Europe and, moreover, he has always stressed the fundamental need to coordinate nature conservation at the international level in this era of globalization. This is what AEWA stands for with its flyway approach towards conserving migratory waterbird species at the international level, which is in line with the vision of Minister Trittin. Over the years your Ministry has supported the work of the Agreement. We are very grateful for that; particularly for the one million Euros allocated by you as financial support to the African-Eurasian Flyways GEF project. Your Excellency, may I kindly request you to take the floor?

AEWA is now ten years old, and a daughter agreement of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. If there is a daughter normally there must be a father and a mother too. The Convention of Migratory Species is the mother convention, and in the case of AEWA we can say that the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Netherlands is the father. In 1983 the initial idea of creating AEWA was launched, and it took 12 years before the Agreement was concluded in 1995. So this was a very long pregnancy. From 1995 to 1999 the baby was fostered by CMS and the Ministry. In 1999 the Agreement entered into force and became independent of its parents.

Dr. Gerard C. Boere needs no introduction, being one of the fathers of AEWA. Gerard used to work for the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality and has been seconded for the last four years to Wetlands International in Wageningen. Last year he organized the Global Flyway Conference in Edinburgh, which was a great success. After this he retired and we are happy that he could make it to come to this event today. Unfortunately, the other 'father', Mr. Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, the former Executive Secretary of CMS, is unable to attend this opening due to other commitments. Together they drafted the Agreement, and the reason we are here today is that AEWA has now been in existence for ten years. This is the crowning of their work. Gerard, may I kindly ask you to take the floor?

It is also my pleasure to introduce Mr. Robert Hepworth who was recently appointed as Executive Secretary to CMS. Mr. Hepworth has been involved in CMS for a long period, be it as a delegate from the United Kingdom or as Chair of the CMS Standing Committee. He has witnessed the development of AEWA and is familiar with this treaty. Rob, it is a pleasure for me to request you to say a few words.