

**Welcoming address held by Professor Dr. J. W. Wägele on the occasion of
the 10th Anniversary of AEWA
Monday 4 July 2005, Museum Koenig, Bonn, Germany**

Minister Trittin,
Mr. Lenten,
Mr. Hepworth,
Dr. Boere,
Ladies and gentlemen,
students,

I am happy to welcome you to the opening of the AEWA exhibition at our museum. The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement is one of many activities of UNEP. I will explain for the students who are present today and probably do not know the acronym: UNEP is the Environment Programme of the United Nations, an international initiative supported by the global community.

An important goal of this Programme is to conserve the environment for human beings as well as for flora and fauna. The goals of UNEP mostly coincide with those of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, and some are also those of this museum.

The “Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig” is one of only a few institutions in Germany with biologists who are able to recognize rare and exotic as well as so-far undiscovered animal species in the field, the most important ability for the protection of species and research on ecological processes. It is no secret that this knowledge has been largely lost within our universities, because these institutions are increasingly taking on responsibilities related to industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and medicine.

It is therefore our special responsibility in this museum to undertake basic research, which cannot realistically be done elsewhere, and also information and education. This we do at different levels here, one of which is the training of young scientists from the University of Bonn; at the moment we have 40 PhD students as well as many undergraduates being taught here. Another of our activities is public relations, which enables us to reach 200,000 people a year with our exhibitions and other media.

This is why there is no doubt that the museum is a well-chosen venue for the AEWA exhibition. I recall that the museum is also working with the UNEP Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) with the Global Register of Migratory Species (GROMS) being maintained by our colleague Dr. Klaus Riede, who is working in-house on this. This is a topic that is also closely related to the protection of waterbirds.

Without this and other initiatives these animals would have no protection against the expansion of mankind. AEWA merits attention, and I am therefore very happy that you, Minister Trittin, were able to find the time to open this exhibition.

Ladies and gentlemen, students. I hope you enjoy your visit to our museum, and will help us to bring many visitors to this exhibition.

Once again, welcome to Museum Koenig!