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REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

At the first Session of the Meeting of the Parties, which took place from 6-9 November 1999 in Cape Town, South Africa, Resolution 1.1. was adopted regarding the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat for AEWA. As laid down in this Resolution, the Meeting of the Parties was convinced of the need to have a permanent Secretariat serving the contracting Parties and implementing their decisions and implementing the Agreement as a whole. Although this statement makes clear what is expected of the Agreement's Secretariat, it does not fully cover all the activities of the Secretariat. For example the following are not mentioned: promoting the Agreement, recruitment of new Parties, preparations for the next Meeting of the Parties, etc.

Although provisions had been made to establish this Secretariat as of 1 January 2000, the recruitment process and the arrangements for the integration of the AEWA Secretariat into UNEP and co-location with the UNEP/ CMS Secretariat caused a delay. After the recruitment of the Executive Secretary, the Permanent Secretariat was established on 17 July 2000 and now has its seat in the UN-Premises in Bonn.

This report aims to inform briefly on the activities of the Permanent Secretariat from 17 July 2000 to the second Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP2).

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AEWA SECRETARIAT

GENERAL

Work of the Secretariat

About 60-70% of the daily work of the secretariat consists in responding to mail, maintenance of the AEWA network with Contracting and Non-Contracting Parties and last but not least, financial and administrative matters. Regarding the latter, although AEWA benefits from the Administrative and Fund Management Officer, who works for CMS and the Agreements Unit, most of the work has to be done by the Secretariat itself. The above-mentioned Officer has the role of certifying officer and to liaise with UNEP/ UNON on behalf of the AEWA Secretariat. This means that the Secretariat drafts all contracts, Host Government Agreements, revision of the budget, etc. Also a certain time is spent reminding Contracting Parties to transfer their annual contribution to the AEWA Trust Fund.

Twice a year, all Non-Contracting Parties are being contacted to urge them to join the Agreement. Communication is not always easy in particular with African countries. Fax-messages have to be sent four, five or six times before they go through. E-mail messages bounce back regularly. However, in order to make any progress in the recruitment of new Parties, it is essential to maintain the network. It is also essential to keep the database of addresses up-to-date as far as possible.

Administrative/ Financial Matters

Since the co-location and integration of the AEWA Secretariat, the Secretariat has been trying to become familiar with the Rules and Procedures of the United Nations and in particular of UNON/ UNEP.

Unfortunately the guidance from the Administrative and Fund Management Officer is limited because she is also fairly new in the UNON/ UNEP system. Familiarization with the Rules of Procedure takes place through learning by making mistakes. However, this is very time-consuming, e.g. Letters of Agreement with consultants to contract out some work to them go back and forth to UNON several times. Each time new questions for clarification are raised or requirements on the substance of the contract change.

The Executive Secretary is fully responsible for all administrative and financial matters of AEWA.

Regarding the latter, financial reports and reviews of the budget have to be produced on a regular basis and submitted by the Secretariat to UNON through CMS. Although the Administrative and Fund Management Officer supports these activities, the work is mainly done by the Secretariat. The same is applicable regarding contracting out work to consultants, purchase of stationary, etc.

Over the last few months, a lot of time has been spent on the year's end closure. It became obvious that financial administration in the Agreement's Unit needs improvement. Although the Secretariat receives overviews of deposits to the AEWA Trust Fund (weekly) and the status of the Trust Fund (monthly) showing the collections of contributions, a monthly overview of the expenditures is missing. The AEWA Secretariat has urged the Administrative and Fund Management Officer to provide the Secretariat with this information, which is needed by the Executive Secretary to manage the annual budget. On 11 February 2002, CMS recruited a Financial Assistant and because of this, the level of efficiency has increased and hopefully in due course, the financial and administrative support will improve.

Agreement's Unit

At their respective Meeting of the Parties, it was decided to co-locate and to integrate EUROBAT as well as ASCOBANS to CMS. Together with AEWA, these Secretariats now form the Agreement's Unit. We try to synchronise our work not only in the Agreement's Unit, but also with CMS.. There is bilateral contact between the agreements and/ or with CMS nearly on a daily basis. It was agreed that meetings would be scheduled on a regular basis between all Agreement's Secretariats and CMS. Although the idea of establishing this Agreement's Unit was conceived years ago, there are still a lot of issues to be clarified dealing with the responsibilities of the Agreement's Secretariats while taking into account that each of these Agreements is a separate legal entity, etc. The Secretariat has made a lot of effort to make the Agreement's Unit a success.

Besides the CMS Agreements based in Bonn, the Secretariat also tries to maintain contact with ACAP (Australia) and with ACCOBAMS (Monaco). Regarding the latter, the Secretariat supported, whenever possible, the ACCOBAMS Secretariat in preparation for their MOP1, by providing documents they could use as a model and by providing some advice. Furthermore, on the request of ACCOBAMS, Ms Mirna Maya (Assistant) strengthened their team during MOP1 as documents control officer.

Recruitment of the Assistant and Temporary Staff

The recruitment procedure for the Assistant to the Executive Secretary started in August 2000. Nearly 40 applications were received, among them highly qualified Secretaries/ Assistants. By the end of September, the interviews with the short-listed candidates took place. Afterwards, the report of the interview panel was sent to UNON with the request to offer the job to the favourite candidate. Months later UNON informed the Secretariat that the job had not been classified before the vacancy announcement was published and that therefore the whole recruitment process should start again from scratch. All efforts made by the Secretariat to change the decision of Nairobi were in vain. So in January 2001, the whole recruitment process started all over again. Fortunately on 1 December 2000, a temporary assistant could be contracted. In March 2001, the interviews took place and the report of the interview panel was submitted to UNON. Finally Ms Mirna Maya received the job offer for this post in June and started officially on 9 July 2002. This means that one year after starting the recruitment process, after a lot of time and effort was invested by the Secretariat, this chapter could finally be closed.

Early in 2002, a decision was taken to recruit some temporary staff on a consultancy basis to increase the capacity of the Secretariat. In order to increase activities on the raising of awareness on non-toxic shot, Ms Nienke Beintema (The Netherlands) was recruited from 15 February to 15 June 2002. Ms Beintema drafted a number of articles on the non-toxic shot issue and a special AEWA Newsletter on this subject. On 15 March, Ms Heike Grelka started as Information Assistant/ Secretary. Ms Grelka is responsible for drafting a regular issue of the AEWA Newsletter, updating the Agreement's Website, developing other information materials and supporting the Assistant with reproduction, formatting and mailing of documents whenever needed. In close co-operation with Wetlands International and under special terms, it was also decided to contract the coordinator of the African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project, Dr Chris Baker (Wetlands International). Dr Baker would draft a special Newsletter on the GEF project. Besides this, he would draft the International Implementation Plan AEWA 2003-2007.

Interns

From 7 November 2001 to 21 December 2001, Ms Jennifer Freychet (France) joined the Secretariat as an intern. Ms Freychet, student at the Lycée Paul Cezanne in Aix en Provence, was looking for an internship for the third semester of the "zweijährige ausbildung" (two years training) as a multilingual Assistant/ Secretary. During her internship, she was a great help to the Secretariat. Besides supporting the Assistant/ Secretary in the day-to-day work, her language skills were a great asset for translating letters into French.

On 1 March 2002, Ms Aicha Zergani (Morocco) joined the Secretariat as an intern. Ms Zergani is studying for a Master's degree in Environmental Law at the University of Bremen. She helped to draft some documents for MOP2 and later on with the preparation of the guideline on national legislation. Unfortunately her internship of only 6 weeks was too short to finalize the activities in particular regarding the guideline on national legislation.

Finalization of MOP1

The AEWA Secretariat secured funds to cover travel and subsistence costs to enable nearly 80 delegates to participate at COP6 and MOP1. These funds were provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Development Cooperation of the Netherlands. Besides, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries covered the organizational costs of MOP1. Reporting back to these Ministries was time consuming and could not be finalized before the Secretariat moved to Bonn.

Beside the rounding up of the financial and administrative matters of MOP1, the Secretariat also had to spend quite some time finalizing the following documents in French: Proceedings, Action Plan 2000-onwards and the International Implementation Priorities 2000-2004. These documents were partly translated by UNON and partly by other translators. Due to the move of the Secretariat and to the lack of human resources, it was not feasible to produce these documents earlier. Since June 2001, all documents are available in English and French.

Preparations for MOP2

Although the major part of the logistical arrangements for MOP2 have been done by the Ministry of Environment and Nuclear Safety (BMU), there was still a lot of work to be done by the Secretariat in this regard. The Executive Secretary participated at several meetings with BMU and CMS to discuss organizational matters.

It is the responsibility of the Agreement's Secretariat to fill in the substantial part of the meeting. We started with these preparations in the middle of 2000, by contracting Wetlands International to prepare some of the technical documents. More information on this can be found under the projects listed below. The documents dealing with financial, administrative and institutional matters were drafted by the Secretariat.

Since the end of 2001, the workload on preparations for MOP2 increased rapidly. The first announcement for MOP2 was sent out to all 1500 addresses in our database. Although nearly 150 completed pre-registration forms were received before the set deadline, it became clear that the registration of some Contracting Parties was still missing. These Parties were sent a reminder by the Secretariat. Furthermore, Parties were reminded to submit their National Reports and to inform the Secretariat who would act as focal point for AEWA.

TC Meetings

The first Meeting of the Technical Committee took place in November 2000 in Bonn, the second in November 2001 in France and the last meeting in May 2002 in Tanzania. Preparations for such meetings are quite time consuming. Besides drafting the necessary documents, the logistical arrangements including travel of funded delegates require the necessary input of the Secretariat.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working group

In accordance with the decision taken by the Technical Committee at its first meeting, the Secretariat started early 2001 with the preparations for the establishment of a working group to implement the D-bellied Brent Goose Management Plan. The third draft of the Management Plan was distributed to the Range States of the Species. Furthermore the Key countries: The Russian Federation, Denmark, Germany, The United Kingdom, The Netherlands and France, have been informed about the decision of the TC and have been requested to appoint a representative to take a seat in the working group. In close co-operation with Dr Jesper Madsen (Denmark), Chairman of the working group, the agenda and venue for the first meeting were discussed. This Meeting took place on 10 October 2001 in Denmark.

After the above-mentioned meeting, the Secretariat received some additional comments on the Action Plan. These amendments were implemented and finally the fourth draft was sent for approval to the Key countries. The Executive Secretary presented this plan to the ORNIS COMMITTEE of the European Union in June 2002. The final draft will be submitted to MOP2 for adoption.

Newsletters

The AEWA Newsletter is highly appreciated by its readers and is widely distributed in the Agreement Area as well as outside. It is an extremely useful tool to disseminate information and at the same time it promotes the Agreement and its implementation. Therefore the Secretariat tries to publish two issues annually.

However, collecting articles from all over the Agreement Area, editing them and/ or writing some of them is very time consuming. Due to the move of the Secretariat from the Netherlands to Bonn and linked to this the integration of the Secretariat into UNEP, it was not feasible to produce two issues in 2001. A special Newsletter on non-toxic shot has been scheduled for 2002, as well as a special Newsletter on the AEWA GEF project and one regular Newsletter.

The move of the Secretariat had also had an impact on our contacts with printers, designers, etc. During the Interim Secretariat period of 5 years, the Secretariat worked with the same printer and designer to produce the Newsletters and this saved a lot of time and energy as everyone knew exactly the terms of reference for producing these Newsletters. Now that the Secretariat is based in Bonn, we have had to invest quite some time in finding out about designers and printers, making a selection of suitable companies and clarifying our terms of reference.

To emphasise that the Agreement has entered into a new era, the Secretariat decided in 2001 to upgrade the Newsletter. Our designer and also printer developed a new design in close co-operation with the Agreement's Secretariat.

PROJECTS

Species Conservation

Guideline on National Legislation for Migratory Waterbirds

In June 2001, contact was made with the IUCN-Environmental Law Centre in Bonn to discuss the drafting of a guideline on National Legislation for Migratory Waterbirds. Early in 2002, agreement was reached with IUCN-ELC and work was contracted out to them to draft this specific guideline. The final draft will be submitted to MOP2 for adoption.

Development of New International Single Species Action Plans

From the minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention (December 2000), it became clear that the Bern Convention Secretariat would like to produce international species action plans for the following globally threatened species: White tailed Eagle, Pallid Harrier, Cinerous Bunting, Sociable Plover, Black-winged Pratincole and Great Snipe. Obviously the drafting of these action plans was still dependant on voluntary contributions. The AEWA Secretariat took the initiative to make contact with the Bern Convention Secretariat and to discuss how AEWA could support the drafting of, in particular, the action plan for the three above-mentioned waterbird species, these species being listed in Annex 2 of AEWA. An agreement was reached that AEWA would cover the cost of drafting the action plan for the Great Snipe. The Bern Convention and the Netherlands would cover the cost of the other five action plans. The AEWA Secretariat concluded, in June 2001, an agreement with the BirdLife International-European division. They will execute the project and the Action Plan for the Great Snipe will be submitted to MOP2. It was also agreed that for these AEWA species action plans, the format of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Management Plan would be used.

Guideline on Avoidance of Introductions of Non-native Migratory Waterbird Species

Support was received from the UK for a desk study and drafting of a guideline on Avoidance of Introductions of Non-native Migratory Waterbirds. The work has been contracted out to Tour-du-Valat and the first results will be available end 2002/ early 2003.

Management of Human Activities

Review of the Use of Non-Toxic Shot for Waterbird Hunting

The Wetlands International Workshop on Lead Poisoning in Waterfowl (Brussels, 1991), was a landmark event for actions which have subsequently taken place to reduce the impact of lead poisoning on waterbirds. Since then, Wetlands International produced the proceedings of this workshop in 1992 and two updated reports in 1995 and 1997. With the financial support of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (UK) and AEWA, a third International Update Report on Lead Poisoning in Waterbirds has been produced and was published in 2001.

The AEWA Secretariat provided input for the questionnaires used to collect information and the draft report. Furthermore, AEWA facilitated the work of Wetlands International providing them with address details of AEWA focal points and urging some of the countries to return their questionnaires. To reach a broader audience the AEWA Secretariat arranged, at its own expense, the translation of the report into French. During the IUCN Meeting (October, 2000), the Executive Secretary discussed the idea of organizing a special workshop on non-toxic shot with the Secretary-General of FACE. The idea was to organize a workshop for Eastern European countries to inform them on alternatives to toxic shot. FACE offered to contribute in kind to this workshop by making the necessary logistical arrangements. AEWA would secure funds to cover the travel and cost of invited delegates from countries with economies in transition. Therefore, the Agreement Secretariat made contact with some of the industrialized countries to seek funding. Switzerland responded to this request and generously offered to cover the cost of funded delegates.

On 11 May 2001, the Executive Secretary visited the headquarters of FACE to discuss the programme in detail. The workshop took place from 24- 28 October 2001 in Romania. Based on the recommendations of this workshop, the Secretariat decided to draft a special issue of the AEWA Newsletter on non-toxic shot. Furthermore, a number of articles were drafted and published on e.g. ballistic differences between lead and non-toxic shot, safety problems, etc. These articles were distributed in June 2002 to all National hunters'

organisations with the request to publish them in their hunting magazines. Some pages on this issue have been included in the Agreement's Website.

As a follow up to the workshop, the Secretariat investigated the feasibility of organizing a similar workshop in southern Europe. In principle, an agreement has been reached with the President of Ill Nibbio (Italy) to organize this kind of workshop early in 2003 in Italy.

Review of the Use of Agrochemicals in Africa and their Impact on Migratory Waterbirds

During the Pan-African Ornithological Congress (September 2000, Uganda), the Executive Secretary discussed the AEWA International Implementation Priorities 2000-2004 with the representative of FAO. The outcome of this discussion was that the representative of FAO showed some interest in project no. 14 "Review of the use of agrochemicals in Africa and their impact on migratory waterbirds". Months later we reached an agreement that the CERES/ LOCUSTOX Foundation, an agency of FAO, will execute this project and will contribute in kind to it. The AEWA Secretariat would cover the remaining costs.

In March 2001, the CERES/ LOCUSTOX Foundation contracted an ornithologist for this project. He will be involved in bibliographic studies, questionnaires and field studies in selected countries. The results will be published in a report. It is foreseen that a draft version report will be available for submission to MOP2.

Research and Monitoring

Study of Potential Impacts of Marine Fisheries on Migratory Waterbirds

There has been significant concern about the potential impact of industrial sea fisheries on the bird population. In particular now because the fleet of European vessels bound for the coast of Africa is increasing due to the fact that more and more African countries have decided to sell concession for fishing in their territorial waters. Therefore there was a need to undertake a desk study to review the potential impact of industrial sea fishing on migratory waterbirds.

Early in 2001, the foreseen study was discussed with some experts. Based on this discussion, the Secretariat started drafting the terms of reference. Later on contact was made with some Western European countries to seek support for this project. The United Kingdom, as well as the Netherlands, offered financial support. At the beginning of 2002, the project was tendered out. After this, it was decided to contract the work out to the University of Cape Town, Avian Demography Unit. The first results are expected in 2003.

Publication of an Atlas for Wader Populations

Wetlands International co-ordinates the development of an Atlas of Wader Populations. In particular the Wader Study Group is strongly involved. Due to the efforts of the AEWA Secretariat, the necessary funds could be secured. At this stage the AEWA Secretariat is following the development of the atlas from a certain distance.

Unfortunately in March 2002, the Secretariat was informed that the project had been hampered by the legal closure of Wetlands International-Africa, Europe and Middle East. Hopefully, these problems will be solved in due course.

Report on the Status and Trends of Populations for MOP2

The Action Plan of AEWA calls for a report on the status and trends of populations covered by the Agreement to be prepared at intervals of not more than three years. Such information provided the basic material for operation, updating and evaluation of the Agreement. The first report was presented at the first Session of the Meeting of the Parties. The final version of the report was published early in 2002.

Early in 2001, Wetlands International was contracted by the Secretariat to update the status and trend of populations covered by AEWA. The updated draft version of the Report on Status and trends of Populations will be ready just in time before MOP2.

Actions for the Conservation of Colonial Waterbirds

A large proportion of the migratory waterbirds species covered by the Agreement, nest in colonies for different reasons. However, this makes these species particularly vulnerable to habitat change, taking of eggs, young or adult, disturbance or emergency situations at such sites.

It was foreseen that a desk study would be necessary to explore options, priorities and costs for co-ordinated monitoring of colonial waterbirds. Furthermore, the drafting of a conservation guideline on national actions would have to be undertaken for colonial waterbirds.

By the end of March 2002, an agreement was reached with the Tour-du-Valat to contract this work out to them. The final results will be available by the middle of 2003. This project is being supported by France.

Exchange of Know-How on Traditional Approaches of Wetland and Waterbird Management in Africa

Rural communities in African countries have developed traditional norms, regulations and technologies for the wise use of migratory waterbirds and their wetlands habitats. Such an approach offers a valuable insight into options for sustainable development and utilization of these resources by rural communities, which may be replicated in other countries.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Netherlands partially committed itself to support this project. Early in 2002, an agreement was reached with IUCN to execute this project. Suitable projects in at least two countries were identified in close consultation with the Secretariat. The final results will be available by the end of 2003.

Conservation Guidelines

At MOP1, the Conservation Guidelines were adopted as initial guidelines. The Meeting requested the Technical Committee to revise the initial guidelines as a matter of urgency. The Technical Committee revised the guidelines at its first meeting and it was decided that an additional guideline should be drafted for international emergency situations. The Secretariat contracted Wetlands International for this work. The AEWA Secretariat finalized the initial guidelines. The finalised version of the initial guidelines as well as the draft for the new guideline on international emergency situations will be submitted to MOP2 for adoption.

Rehabilitation of Important Sites for Migratory Waterbirds, which have been Degraded by Invasive Species of Aquatic Weeds

As indicated in the International Implementation Priorities 2000-2004, a large number of wetlands (including many of international importance to migratory waterbirds) particularly in tropical Africa, have been degraded by invasions of species of aquatic weeds.

Being aware that the RAMSAR Bureau is working on the same subject, the Secretariat took the initiative to make contact with them to discuss further co-operation with RAMSAR and other relevant organisations. At the 10th Scientific and Technical Panel of RAMSAR, it was decided to invite AEWA to participate in the drafting of a Resolution and its annex on "wetland management and invasive species" to be tabled at the RAMSAR COP8. Meanwhile RAMSAR and IUCN are organizing workshops in Africa on this theme. Linked to the JWP Programme between RAMSAR, CMS and AEWA, in the coming months we will discuss how the co-operation between these Secretariats could be strengthened regarding eradication of invasive species.

Meanwhile this project has been contracted out to IUCN. In close co-operation with the Agreement, the IUCN Secretariat identified some suitable projects in Africa.

Education and Information

Development of the Agreement's Website

The Internet is fast becoming the most effective tool for communication and awareness activities at international level. It offers an excellent, cost-effective means for promotion, co-ordination and implementation of many aspects of the Agreement. The existing website was out of date and therefore there was a need to update it and to make it more attractive. The voluntary contribution from the Government of Germany enabled the Secretariat to contract the World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to develop a new website. The project started in 2000 and will end by the end of this year. In May 2001, the first phase of this new website was launched. The AEWA Secretariat is strongly involved in the further development.

UNEP-WCMC developed a map and a graphic-based application that enhances the appearance and effectiveness of the AEWA website. Besides the existing documents, new text has also been provided by the Secretariat to be included in the website. Meanwhile the first steps have been taken by the Agreement Secretariat to familiarize itself with HTML/ specific computer programmes in order to be able to update the website regularly.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Workshop “Towards a Strategy for Waterbirds and Wetlands Conservation in the Central Asian Flyway”

For many years, there has been a strong wish to start the development of a strategy for waterbirds and wetlands conservation for the Central Asian-Indian Flyway. A long time ago, CMS reached an agreement with the RAMSAR Bureau, Wetlands International and the Netherlands to hold a workshop in the region to discuss this idea. However year –after –year, the workshop has been postponed. In 2000, Wetlands International requested the Netherlands to support the drafting of an Action Plan for the Central Asian-Indian Flyway. This application was approved early in 2001 and afterwards a flyway officer could be appointed to draft the action plan. However this project is being hampered by the legal closure of Wetlands International-Africa-Europe and Middle East. Hopefully these problems will be solved soon to enable Wetlands International to continue its activities.

The Central Asian-Indian Flyway partly overlaps with the AEWA Agreement Area. Therefore the AEWA Secretariat showed an interest in being involved in this project. At the request of CMS, the AEWA Secretariat has taken the lead to co-ordinate the activities on behalf of CMS. These activities consist of organizing a workshop, liaising with the Host Government, co-ordinating the activities of Wetlands International, drafting and mailing of the invitation letter, etc. Together all these activities have been quite time consuming. As a follow up to the meeting, the AEWA Secretariat has drafted a discussion paper on the three options of future international concerted actions in the CAIF region. The Secretariat also commented on the draft Action Plan.

Joint Workplan with the Ramsar Bureau

A few years ago, CMS drafted a Joint Work Programme (JWP) between the RAMSAR bureau and CMS. Although both organisations were in favour of this JWP, it has never been finalized because the people involved from CMS as well as from the RAMSAR Bureau have left office.

AEWA is fully complementary to the RAMSAR Convention, however there is also some overlap. To avoid any duplication or to enhance each other activities there is a need to synchronise our work plans. Therefore the AEWA Secretariat, in close co-operation with CMS, updated the existing draft JWP incorporating specific AEWA issues. A first draft has been sent to the RAMSAR Bureau and to CMS in April 2001 with the request to make comments. Unfortunately no comments have been received so far from the RAMSAR Bureau. Hopefully an agreement can be reached with the RAMSAR Bureau and CMS Secretariat before MOP2.

African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project

Early in 2000, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) decided to grant US \$ 350,000 for the drafting of a project brief of a full-size African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project of between US \$ 8-12 million.

The Secretariat is one of the members of the Steering Committee of this project. The Committee met for the first time in November 2001 in Wageningen, the Netherlands. The Secretariat participated at this meeting during which the project was reviewed and the work programme approved.

As indicated in the project description, during the Project Development Phase (PDF) two outreach workshops should be held, one in the Middle East and one in Central Asia. The aim of these workshops is to improve regional communications, co-operation and co-ordination. As for all Conventions Secretariats, the contact with the Middle East and Central Asia is very weak. Therefore the Secretariat decided to participate at the Middle East workshop, which took place in January 2001 in Bahrain and try to establish a better network with this region. For the same reason the Secretariat also participated at the Central Asian-Indian Flyway Workshop which was held in Uzbekistan in August 2001.

As a member of the Steering Committee, the Executive Secretary is strongly involved in the development of the project brief for the full size project. In this capacity he, together with a representative of the Technical Committee participated at the two days workshop “Analysis of the gaps of knowledge of the critical wetlands areas required by migratory waterbirds”, which took place in June 2001 in Wageningen (the Netherlands).

The project brief for the full-size project will be ready just before MOP2. The level of funds available at the GEF Secretariat are, however, a cause for concern. Together with UNEP/ GEF, the decision was taken to postpone submission of the project brief for a few months and hopefully by the middle of 2003, the

project could be approved. Furthermore another concern is to seek the matching funds, US \$ 4-6 million, required for approval of the project by the GEF Secretariat. Together with colleagues from the RAMSAR Bureau, BirdLife International and Wetlands International, the Secretariat promised to do its utmost to seek additional funding.

AEWA Film

With financial support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Netherlands, a professional filmmaker could be contracted to draft a scenario for a film on AEWA. The idea is to produce a promotion film of not more than 20 minutes. The short film would made clear why AEWA is necessary for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. The film could be shown at Meetings of experts and policy officers but also to the general public. Research is being done whether the film could also be shown on television. Although the scenario is ready it will take a while before the necessary funds can be secured. The cost of the production of this film is estimated at US \$ 175,000.

The necessary funds have not been secured yet. However there is a fair chance that part of the funds could be provided through the African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project. Meanwhile there was a suggestion to produce the film on DVD. The latter gives the possibility, via a computer, to change the storyboard?? whenever desirable, which means that the film could be modified for a specific target group.

Memorandum of Understanding for Breeding Seabirds in Southern Africa

After the oil-spill disaster around the Robben-island (South Africa), which affected a high number of African penguins, the idea arose to draft a Memorandum of Understanding under the auspices of CMS for this species. Through the years, more and more species have been included in the draft MOU and finally it has been decided to focus on all breeding Seabirds in southern Africa encompassing South Africa, Namibia and Angola.

The Secretariat participated at the Workshop on the Conservation Assessment and Management Plan for Southern African Coastal Seabirds, which was held from 4-8 February 2002 in Cape Town, South Africa. During this workshop, the possible administrative and institutional arrangements concerning the conservation of Southern Africa Seabirds was discussed. The outcome of this discussion was that the participants preferred to include the seabird species into AEWA instead of concluding a stand-alone MOU. Of the proposed 17 species, five were included in AEWA already. Special attention is needed for the population of these specific species. Of the remaining 12 species, one (Leach's Storm Petrel) will be submitted for inclusion in the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. South Africa will submit the others for inclusion in AEWA and by doing this, there will be no need to include a special MOU for the coastal Seabirds of Southern Africa.