



REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE¹ 20 - 21 November 2006, UN, Langer Eugen, Bonn, Germany

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. The Chairman of the Standing Committee, Mr. Emmanuel Severre, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He congratulated the Executive Secretary, Mr. Bert Lenten, for his reappointment on 1 May 2006 and the Secretariat for its new offices in the historical building of 'Langer Eugen', which had generously been provided by the German government.
2. Ms Christiane Paulus of the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety welcomed the participants in the city of Bonn and introduced herself as the new Head of International Nature Conservation at the Ministry.
3. The Executive Secretary, Mr. Bert Lenten, informed the participants about the press conference, which would take place the same day to launch the GEF 'Wings over Wetlands' project (WOW). Expressing his pleasure about the fact that the project, which was conceived in Germany in 1999, would now also be launched in Germany, he thanked the German government for generously hosting this launching event.
4. Mr. Martin Lok, who for the first time represented the Depositary, introduced himself and thanked the Secretariat and Germany for respectively hosting the meeting and for the launch of WOW.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

5. Mr. Lenten introduced Document StC 4.2. referring to Mr. Ward Hagemeijer, Wetlands International, who at the third meeting of the Standing Committee, had suggested that the Secretariat reviews the rules of procedures respectively of the Standing and the Technical Committees in order to harmonise the two documents regarding the cooperation of these two bodies, Mr. Lenten proposed to amend Rule 5 by adding the sentence "*It works closely with the Technical Committee to ensure consistency across the Agreement's work.*"
6. The meeting adopted the inclusion with the following wording:
The Standing Committee works closely with the Technical Committee to ensure consistence in the work of the Agreement.
7. Concerning Rule 11 Mr. Lenten suggested amending "*representative from the Southern African region*" to "*representative from the Eastern and Southern African region*".
8. The meeting adopted the amendment.
9. Mr. Lenten further suggested reconsidering the term of office in Rule 14 and, as in the case of the Technical Committee, making it expire "*at the second ordinary meeting of the Parties following the meeting at which they were originally elected*" instead of "*at the close of [its] next ordinary session*"

¹ Adopted by the Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee, 24 -25 June 2008, Bonn, Germany

Referring to the second sentence of Rule 14 Mr. Yousoof Mungroo, Chairman of the Technical Committee, argued that a change was not needed.

11. The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to submit a proposal to the next Meeting of the Parties, which could then decide on this question.

12. Mr. Lenten referred to the third meeting of the Standing Committee at which the meeting had decided to change the term “presiding officer” in Rules 21 and 23 to “*Chairman of the Meeting of the Parties*”. In order to provide the possibility that the Vice Chairman of the Meeting of the Parties could also fulfil the function, Mr. Lenten suggested leaving the term of “*presiding officer*”.

13. The meeting adopted the amendment.

14. Referring to Rule 24, Mr. Mungroo suggested organising meetings of the Standing Committee twice per triennium instead of annually as in the case of the Technical Committee.

15. Mr. Lenten pointed out that the Standing Committee played a different role to that of the Technical Committee. The guidance given to the Secretariat by the Standing Committee - especially in financial issues – is necessary in order to ensure the Secretariat’s functioning.

16. Stressing the importance of the Standing Committee for the work of the Secretariat and for the preparation of the Meeting of the Parties, the Chairman suggested continuing with the current practice of having a Standing Committee meeting each year.

17. The Standing Committee agreed and adopted the Rules of Procedure subject to inclusion of the above amendments.

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda

18. Mr. Lenten introduced Document StC 4.3 rev.1, which was adopted.

Agenda item 4. Admission of Observers

19. Mr. Lenten welcomed Mr. Andrej Bibic, the representative from Slovenia, who was attending a Standing Committee meeting for the first time. In addition representatives from Wetlands International, UNOPS, UNEP, CMS, ASCOBANS, and a representative of Span Consultants as well as the Chairman of the Technical Committee were present.

Agenda item 5. Adoption of the draft Report of the third meeting of the Standing Committee

20. Mr. Lenten introduced Document StC 4.4 and asked the participants for comments.

Mr. Schall pointed out a mistake on page 1, point 1, in the name of the German Ministry, correctly being the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (instead of Reactor Safety). In addition he suggested adding the date and venue of the meeting in the title of the document for practical reasons.

21. Ms. Margaret Oduk, who represented UNEP, requested amending the name of Mr. Bakary Kante on page 2, point 6, which was incorrectly spelled “*Bakari*”.

22. Mr. Mungroo suggested replacing the word “losses” in the 6th paragraph of page 7, point 16 by the word “shortages”. Moreover, he requested changing the first sentence of page 12, point 22 a) from “...*great interest of AEWA*” into “...*great interest to AEWA*”. Finally, he asked the Secretariat to annex a list of attendance to the meeting reports in future.

23. The Report of the Third meeting of the Standing Committee was adopted subject to inclusion of these amendments.

Agenda item 6. Reports from the Standing Committee members and observers

24. The Chairman invited the members and observers to report on progress made regarding AEWA in their respective regions.

25. Mr. Lenten suggested that the Standing Committee members be more proactive in their regions, as in the case of CMS, where Standing Committee members take on the function of ambassadors; he also invited the Standing Committee members to promote the Agreement in their respective regions.

26. Mr. Lok reported from the Netherlands that the launch of the proceedings of the “Waterbirds around the World conference”, Edinburgh, 2004, was scheduled for 2007.

27. Mr. Oliver Schall reported from Germany that a bilateral meeting was planned with the government of the Russian Federation in May or June 2007. Time would also be allocated for a visit to the UN Campus in order to discuss the accession of the Russian Federation to CMS and AEWA. The CBD COP9 would take place in Bonn in 2008, which he suggested may be a good opportunity for the AEWA Secretariat to promote the accession of Non-Party Range States to AEWA.

28. Finally, highlighting the excellent work done by the AEWA Information Officer (JPO), Mr. Schall brought to the attention of the meeting that his Ministry would strongly support the extension of the German sponsored JPO post within AEWA for a third year. However, he noted that the final decision on extension of the JPO post within the German Government would take place early 2007.

29. The Chairman thanked Germany for the very good news regarding the JPO and stressed the importance of this statement for AEWA and the implementation of its Communication Strategy. On behalf of the Standing Committee, he strongly requested Germany to approve the third year.

30. Mr. Charles Mdoe reported from Tanzania, which had been represented at the International Lesser Flamingo Action Plan Workshop held in Nairobi, 25-29 September 2006 together with Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti, Ethiopia, South Africa and Botswana. A draft international action plan had been elaborated, which would be submitted to the 4th Meeting of the Parties to AEWA as well as to the 9th Conference of the Parties to CMS.

31. Moreover, a 1-day Stakeholders Workshop on the Lesser Flamingo had been held in Dar-Es-Salaam on 25 August 2006. The workshop had been facilitated by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (WCST) in collaboration with the Wildlife Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT). The purpose of this workshop had been to exchange information and knowledge regarding the status and distribution of the Lesser Flamingo in Tanzania, to develop a strategy for the conservation of important habitats for the species and to gather information on the conservation status of the species that would provide inputs to the planning of the workshop in Nairobi mentioned above.

32. Tanzania had started the process of developing and implementing national single species action plans for migratory birds covered by the Agreement. Tanzania, through its AEWA Committee under the National Wetlands Working Group (NWWG), had selected 11 species, which qualified to be subject to single species action plans, being the Greater Flamingo, the White Stork, the African Spoonbill, the Lesser Crested Tern, the White-backed Duck, the Cape Teal, the Chestnut-banded Plover, the Caspian Plover, the Caspian Tern, the Wattled Crane and the Shoebill. The development of these single species action plans would be ready by January 2007.

33. Mr. Mdoe finally expressed his hope that Tanzania could be involved in the development of a Strategic Plan for AEWA.

34. Mr. Lenten remarked that, in addition, the launching event for the World Migratory Bird Day had taken place in Kenya in April 2006.

35. Ms. Oduk, on behalf of the Director of UNEP/DEC, Mr. Bakary Kante, congratulated the Agreement for its successful membership development and encouraged range states, which have not yet become a Contracting Party to AEWA, to do so. Moreover, she congratulated the Agreement for its successful implementation, also referring to the launch of the “WOW” project, which would take place on that day. Referring to the 2010 target as well as to the Avian Influenza seminar, which had been organised by the AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with CMS and UNEP, Ms. Oduk made clear that cooperation among the different biodiversity-related MEAs was crucial. That was also the reason why UNEP funded a project on knowledge management for biodiversity-related Conventions and Agreements, which had been launched at a meeting in June 2006, Cambridge, UK. The CMS family had been represented at this meeting by AEWA.

36. Pointing out the success of the first World Migratory Bird Day, which had proven to be an effective tool for the promotion of public awareness and education on migratory birds and their ecological importance, Ms. Oduk, on behalf of Mr. Kante, assured full support from UNEP for the work of AEWA, offered UNEP’s technical advice for supporting the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and congratulated AEWA for its efforts to raise funds outside the existing donor base.

37. On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Chairman expressed his warm regards to the Director of UNEP/DEC and gave the floor to Slovenia.

38. Mr. Andrej Bibic reported from Slovenia that its Ministry for the Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) had prepared a Biodiversity Action Plan and Programme of Management of the Nature 2000 network (2007-2013), which represented a management plan for all Slovenian sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds. Moreover, the preparation of a long-term strategy to handle the Cormorant-fisheries conflict had started. One of the aims of this strategy was to maintain a favourable conservation status of threatened waterbirds and their habitats, especially at wintering and migration sites. Progress had been made with the implementation of the national activities for Slovenia outlined in the Single Species Action Plan for the Corncrake. The habitat of the corncrake had increased substantially thanks to agro-environmental measures. In addition, important sites for the Corncrake were benefiting from an ongoing LIFE project and a new LIFE project had already been secured for the period 2007-2010.

39. Finally, Mr. Bibic pointed out that Slovenia would take over the EU presidency in the first half of 2008. He expressed Slovenia’s interest in being involved in the drafting process of proposed amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement. These would have an impact on the EU legislation and Slovenia would have to deal with this during its presidency.

Agenda item 7. Report of the Depositary

40. On behalf of the Depositary, Mr. Lok presented Document StC 4.5, which showed an overview of 57 countries having joined AEWA at the time of this meeting. Madagascar and Guinea Bissau were in the final process of acceding. Mr Lok congratulated AEWA for its successful membership development.

Agenda item 8. Report of the Technical Committee

41. Mr. Mungroo reported on the TC7 meeting, which had taken place from 29 October – 1 November 2006 in Berne, Switzerland. The meeting had been attended by all representatives as well as observers from 4 NGOs and 3 Range States. The members had discussed more than 30 items including the TC Work plan for 2006 -2008, which had already been approved by the TC members intersessionally in February 2006. The work plan included tasks for 11 working groups, which all had a Chair being responsible for the workflow. The working groups had presented first draft papers, which had been discussed by the participants. The working groups would continue their work

intersessionally and some working groups would meet for a workshop in Bonn. Working groups, which were relevant to the development of the online national reporting system, had been merged.

42. TC7 had confirmed that the Conservation status review, being a flagship document of the Agreement, should continuously be developed in intervals of three years. Mr. Mungroo reported that the European Commission had given a grant for the production of the Conservation status report for MOP4. However, he strongly recommended financing this report through the core budget and making it a priority in the budget.

43. Finally, he reported back that the meeting documents had been available in English and French; interpretation from English into French, however, had been missing. For future meetings the Secretariat would strongly recommend the host countries to provide interpretation. Moreover, contact would be made with the "Association de la Francophonie" in order to seek for support. The 8th meeting of the Technical Committee would take place in early 2008. The host country had not been confirmed yet. However, Ghana had shown interest in hosting TC8.

Agenda item 9. Press Conference "WOW"

44. The Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) African-Eurasian GEF Flyways Project was launched and introduced to the media and invited guests by an expert panel consisting of representatives from the leading implementing organisations and main project sponsors, including the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), UNOPS/UNEP-GEF, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the AEWA Secretariat. The WOW Press Conference was attended by several StC participants and was followed by a reception hosted by the German Government.

Agenda item 10. Report of the Secretariat

45. Mr. Bert Lenten introduced Document StC 4.6 and gave a presentation on the most important activities undertaken by the Secretariat since MOP3.

46. Mr. Schall and Mr. Lok congratulated the Secretariat for the excellent work, which had been done. Mr. Lok reported that, as already discussed with the Secretariat, the Netherlands were planning to make a substantial financial contribution to the WOW project and expressed his hope that the final decision would be taken very soon.

47. Moreover, he announced that the Netherlands would be pleased to be involved in the organisation of the World Migratory Bird Day 2007 and a linked scientific seminar on climate change. He suggested that it might be a good opportunity to combine these events with the launch of the proceedings of the Edinburgh "Waterbirds around the world" conference.

48. Referring to considerations regarding a workshop on promoting AEWA in Moscow, Mr. Lok mentioned that the accession of the Russian Federation to AEWA was one of the issues being discussed between the governments of the Russian Federation and the Netherlands. On behalf of the Netherlands, Mr. Lok offered to continue assisting AEWA with recruiting the Russian Federation.

49. Mr. Schall pointed out that the EU was currently planning to enlarge the Network Natura 2000 towards the open sea by designating a number of marine areas, which might also be of interest for AEWA in relation to the discussion on inclusion of some seabirds to Annex 2 of the Agreement.

50. Mr. Lenten pointed out that some species under AEWA were already considered as being seabirds. Regarding the inclusion of (more) seabirds, however, a discussion at the last TC meeting had shown that countries had yet to be identified, which were prepared to table the issue at MOP4. A proposal for the inclusion of seabirds to Annex 2 of the Agreement was currently being elaborated by the Technical Committee and would most probably correspond to the one submitted to MOP3, which had been rejected for procedural reasons.

51. To avoid problems similar to those encountered at MOP3, Mr. Lenten said that the Secretariat would discuss with the European Commission if this and other issues could be worked on together in a more coordinated manner.

52. Referring to MOP3, which had requested the Technical Committee, in close cooperation with the Secretariat, to take into consideration the actions taken by other relevant international organisations, Mr. Lenten reported that according to the outcomes of the last Technical Committee meeting, no other international body had the mandate for conserving seabirds. The Technical Committee had therefore concluded that seabirds could be covered by AEWA. A special working group of the Technical Committee had been in charge of this issue and would present these outcomes to MOP4.

53. The Chairman pointed out that it might be a difficult process for countries to implement the amendments to the Annexes of AEWA in their national legislation and that such amendments may require ratification.

54. Mr. Lenten answered that amendments to the Agreement's annexes could be done by a decision of the MOP and did not require a formal re-ratification of the amended Agreement and its Annexes.

55. Mr. Lok suggested that the factor of time however, might be a problem as birds added to the AEWA annexes also had to be added on EU level.

56. Mr. Schall recommended discussing the new proposal in a Standing Committee meeting before submitting it to MOP4 in order to avoid conflicts in the selection of birds with the mother Convention.

57. Mr. Lenten clarified that the initiative of including new species to the AEWA annexes had been taken by MOP2, which, in its Resolution 2.1, had requested the Technical Committee to review further developments of the Agreement by including additional species of wetland birds and species traditionally considered to be seabirds as well as to consider the extent to which the existing Action Plan was adequate in its scope to address differing conservation problems faced by birds of prey, passerines and other taxonomic groups using wetlands. The Secretariat would meet with representatives of the EU very soon in order to investigate the EU procedures and whether an EU country would be willing to suggest the inclusion. If the finalised version of the document currently being elaborated by the Technical Committee was acceptable for the EU and there are no reservations on the part of its member countries, it could be submitted to MOP4.

Agenda item 11. International Implementation Priorities

58. Mr. Lenten introduced Document StC 4.7 and informed the Standing Committee about the progress made regarding the International Implementation Priorities 2006-2008. Thanks to funding received, implementation of 6 of the 36 projects was underway.

Agenda item 12. Report on the launch of World Migratory Bird Day

59. Mr. Florian Keil, the Information Officer (JPO) of AEWA, gave a presentation on World Migratory Bird Day 2006, highlighting the activities and work carried out by the AEWA Secretariat to initiate and organise this global commemorative event in 2006.

60. Following the presentation, Mr. Lenten outlined his vision and future plans for the World Migratory Bird Day initiative. Noting that WMBD 2006 was one of the most wide-reaching and successful awareness-raising activities ever conducted by AEWA, he explained that the Secretariat planned and was committed to organising the World Migratory Bird Day for 3-4 years until it became self-sustainable. During this time he would try to secure funds, for example from the Postcode Lottery of the Netherlands to enable the establishment of a small independent Secretariat in cooperation with BirdLife International. An amount of € 500,000 – 1 million would be sufficient in order to finance such a Secretariat for a period of 5 years. During this period this Secretariat should

become self-sustaining. The idea is to create a consortium of representatives from AEWA, CMS and BirdLife International which would supervise and oversee the work of the WMBD Secretariat.

61. Mr. Lenten pointed out that the theme for the next World Migratory Bird Day (2007) would be climate change and that a scientific seminar on climate change would be linked to the main event in the Netherlands as well as the probable launch of the proceedings of the “Waterbirds around the World” Conference.

62. Mr. Schall welcomed the started practice of organising a main event in a different country each year and suggested linking World Migratory Bird Day 2009 to the Bird and Nature Festival in Baye de Somme, France.

63. The Chairman endorsed the Secretariat’s plan to continue organising World Migratory Bird Day during the next 2-3 years, pointing out that the political support needed for obtaining recognition in the different countries would be easier to come by if based on an international treaty rather than by an independent secretariat. During this time AEWA could work on developing mechanisms which would make World Migratory Bird Day self-sustaining.

Agenda item 13. Development of a Strategic Plan for AEWA

64. Ms. Gwen van Bowen, Span Consultants, informed the Standing Committee members that in addition to interviews with different key persons involved in AEWA she would hold a brainstorming session with the Standing Committee members that day, which would enable her to produce a first draft Strategic Plan for AEWA.

65. Ms. van Bowen suggested starting the discussion with an open question (“What do you want AEWA to achieve in the next five years?”).

66. The Chairman noted that it might be more useful to make a situation analysis rather than initiating an open discussion.

67. Mr. Hagemeyer suggested that the existing documents, namely the Agreement text, the Action Plan, the International Implementation Priorities and the annual work plan for the Secretariat should be used to make such a situation analysis and that the Strategic Plan should be the document, which brings all these existing documents together.

68. Mr. Lenten clarified that the existing documents would, of course, flow into the drafting process. His view was that the Strategic Plan would be the document linking the Agreement text, Action Plan and the International Implementation Priorities.

69. Ms. Van Bowen was interested to know what had been discussed at the Technical Committee meeting regarding the AEWA Strategic Plan.

70. Mr. Lenten explained that a working group had been formed, which would deal with the development of the Strategic Plan. The Technical Committee had explicitly expressed that it wished to be involved in the drafting process. The working group should therefore actively be involved.

71. The Standing Committee split up into two working groups, which both drew up an overview of objectives and targets for the Strategic Plan for AEWA.

72. It was agreed that a first draft based on this work would be delivered by the Consultant mid December.

Agenda item 14. Implementation of the Communication Strategy

73. Mr. Lenten introduced Document StC 4.8 and the Standing Committee took note of the progress

made with the implementation of the Communication Strategy since MOP3.

74. Referring to Resolution 3.10 Mr. Lenten pointed out that the strategy was supposed to be financed by voluntary contributions and that, unfortunately, not many contributions linked to the communication strategy had been received so far. Mr. Lenten noted that, however, the positive message announced by Mr. Schall during this meeting concerning a third year for the JPO was very promising. With 30 % of his staff time dedicated to the implementation of the Communication Strategy, the JPO's work was crucial for this task of the Secretariat. In addition, the Secretariat had recruited a part-time Information Assistant who would also contribute to the implementation of the Communication Strategy.

75. Mr. Mungroo asked if training of trainers at the regional level (activity 3.1 of the Communication Strategy) could be organised for Africa as a whole, in order to save costs.

76. Mr. Lenten explained that part of the WOW project was dedicated to this activity. Under WOW, Africa had been divided into different regions. Moreover, it might be difficult to organise training for Africa as a whole due to the different languages spoken in the different regions of the continent. Also the number of trainees would probably be too high. However, he stressed that the Secretariat was still looking into ways to save costs. An idea could be to link such training to the regional Meeting of the Parties in Africa in 2007.

Agenda item 15. Latest information on Avian Influenza

77. Ms. Dunia Sforzin, the interim Coordinator of the International Scientific Taskforce on Avian Influenza, Wildlife and the Environment, gave a presentation on the work of the Taskforce, which had been established in August 2005 by CMS. The AEWa Secretariat was one of the members of the Taskforce. Its aim was to bring together the best scientific advice on the conservation impact of the spread of avian influenza, assessing the role of migratory birds as vectors of the virus, and issuing advice on the root causes of the epidemic, as well as on technically sound measures to combat it.

78. Mr. Keil informed the Standing Committee about the newly developed Avian Influenza, Wildlife and the Environment Website (www.aiweb.info), a designated information dissemination centre for the International Scientific Taskforce on the World Wide Web. The website, which was developed by the AEWa Secretariat in close cooperation with the Internet Division of UNEP/DCPI for the CMS-led AI Taskforce was now fully operational. The website was handed over to the CMS Secretariat sponsored AI Taskforce Coordinator after it was launched on 1 November 2006 at the Living Lakes Conference in Nachang, China.

79. In response, Mr. Schall was interested to know if many hits had been registered for AIWEB in the areas of outbreaks. In addition, Ms Christiane Paulus asked Mr. Keil for his assessment of why he thought the extensive media coverage on Avian Influenza witnessed globally in the past had subsided and why no outbreaks were currently being reported in the press.

80. Mr. Keil explained that the website was located on the new UNEP webserver in Geneva and was being technically managed and hosted by the specialised Internet Division at UNEP/DCPI and that website traffic statistics for AIWEB could be made available. However, he pointed out that AIWEB had probably not been visited much as yet, as it had only recently been launched. He also underlined that AIWEB would now have to be maintained by the designated CMS Taskforce Coordinator and actively used by the members of the Taskforce to remain up-to-date and to really be able to convince its audience and target groups.

81. In response to the media coverage question relating to Avian Influenza, Mr. Keil noted that it is important to continuously monitor the global media tenor/coverage on Avian Influenza and that AIWEB could be used by the taskforce and the coordinator to publicise future coordinated responses to reports of H5N1 outbreaks by the AI Taskforce.

82. Arguing from a media perspective, it was his view that the intense public and global media discussion about Avian Influenza had, in a way, been pushed from the top of the media agenda by the Football World Cup 2006. However, he noted that he believed that the topic of AI and migratory birds could easily return to dominate the media again, but that he hoped that this time AIWEb would be used by the taskforce to collectively respond to any unfounded, sensational media coverage implicating migratory birds as the sole vectors of global H5N1 transmission.

83. The whole rationale behind the AI taskforce and AIWEb was to create a tool to respond to the media hype surrounding and pinpointing migratory birds and both the CMS and AEWA Secretariats were trying to work against the fact that a media story was made of each dead bird; stories which had a devastating cumulative effect on the public perception of migratory birds.

Ms. Sforzin informed the Standing Committee members that she was not aware of any major outbreaks encountered at that time.

84. Mr. Dereliev confirmed that no outbreaks had been recorded by the relevant NGOs for this season. However, his assessment was that as soon as there would be a new outbreak the media would most probably react to it.

85. Mr. Lok pointed out that for the Ministry level it was very important that information was made available in such situations and expressed his thanks and respect to the AEWA and CMS Secretariats for having provided this means.

86. Mr. Schall asked how the vaccination of poultry against Avian Influenza was judged among experts.

87. Mr. Dereliev explained that this was a difficult issue and that experts did not have a clear answer to this question yet.

88. Mr. Lenten pointed out that Avian Influenza was a disease affecting poultry rather than wild birds. Outbreaks last year had mainly been registered in winter; therefore he expected that new outbreaks could still be encountered within the following months.

89. Mr. Mungroo informed the Standing Committee about a presentation given at the last Meeting of the Technical Committee by a representative of the joint project of Germany, Switzerland and Austria in the region of Lake Constance, named "Constanze", which had shown that knowledge on this issue was still lacking.

Agenda item 16. Administrative and financial matters

90. Mr. Lenten presented Document StC 4.9 "Report on Income and Expenditures for 2005 and 2006".

a) Budget of 2005

91. Mr. Lenten presented the budget 2005 (Annex 1 and 2). The budget of 2005 had been adopted under MOP2 (Resolution 2.7) and was therefore still held in US Dollars, which explained the exchange rate loss encountered particularly regarding salaries. Since 2006 the budget was held in Euro so that the Secretariat did not have any problems in connection with exchange rate losses in that budgetary year.

92. The budgetary year of 2005 had ended with a surplus of 41,847 USD in the AWL budget. However, the accounts of 2005 had not yet been closed. The establishment of the Second Trust Fund decided by MOP3 was still in process, and the Secretariat had to wait for its finalisation before being able to make a final budget revision and to close the accounts of 2005. Mr. Lenten proposed allocating the surplus of 41,847 USD for 2006.

93. Due to the delayed launch of the GEF project, the 90,000 USD allocated to this project in 2005 could not be transferred to Wetlands International. Mr. Lenten asked the Standing Committee to agree that 90,000 USD would be taken from the reserve and allocated to the GEF project as provisionally foreseen in 2005.

94. Cooperation with ASCOBANS had helped to save money in budget line 1201 'English translators'. At MOP3 approximately 150,000 USD could be saved, because the AEWA Secretariat had run the meeting without additional service from UNON. The costs for travel had increased in 2005 due to increasing air fares. Also the host of the last MOP had not refunded the travel of the Secretariat related to MOP3 yet, as agreed in the Host Government Agreement.

95. Referring to the overview of expenditures in Annex 2 (QSL - Counterpart contributions), Mr. Lenten clarified that these were expenditures of earmarked contributions received from various sources. As soon as the Second Trust Fund was established, money for all those projects, which had not yet been finalised, could be transferred to it.

96. Mr. Schall requested clarification of the terms AWL and QSL.

97. Mr. Lenten explained that these were codes in the budget. In future, this differentiation would no longer exist because voluntary contributions would be booked to the separate Second Trust Fund. The transfer of money between two trust funds is much easier than it is currently the case with AWL and QSL.

98. Mr. Schall expressed his concern about the fact that the Second Trust Fund had not been established yet.

99. Ms Oduk took note of the expressed concerns and promised to report back to UNEP.

100. Ms Kanza clarified that the system of authorities within the UN was very time-consuming, which was the reason why the Second Trust Fund had still not been established. Special codes for the new Trust Fund had to be issued, which was done by UN New York. UNEP had requested these codes, but was now waiting for New York to respond.

101. Mr. Mungroo was concerned that the length of this process might have a negative influence on the proper functioning of the Secretariat and suggested establishing a temporary mechanism in order to enable the Secretariat to allocate funds it received.

102. Ms Kanza assured that the issue would be solved by end of the month.

103. Mr. Lenten clarified that solutions had actually been found in order to continue with the ongoing projects. The lengthy process of establishing a Second Trust Fund had not stopped the activities of the Secretariat, which kept track of the money coming in. The funds just had to be booked temporarily to a special budget line of the existing Trust Fund. However, it was regrettable that additional work was produced by the fact that the transfer of that money from the First to the Second Trust Fund would need a revision once the Second Trust Fund was established. Neither the AEWA nor the CMS Secretariats could have foreseen that the process of establishing the additional Trust Fund would take so much time. He promised that the issue would be cleared soon and stressed that, although the books of 2005 had not been closed yet, activities had, nevertheless, been able to continue.

104. Mr. Schall asked why the surplus of 41,847 USD in the AWL budget was not used for the GEF project in order to have money available for this project as soon as possible instead of taking the whole amount from the reserve.

105. Mr. Lenten pointed out that at the last Meeting of the Parties the production of international reviews had been given high priority by the Parties. He therefore suggested allocating this money for

the international reviews. The 90,000 USD for the GEF project were available in the reserve so there was no need to additionally allocate the regular budget money to this project.

106. Ms Kanza also recommended to use the 41,847 USD for activities which had already been approved rather than to put it into the reserve.

107. Mr. Schall asked if there were recommendations from the auditors saying how high the reserve should be so that it could be assessed whether having 15 % of the budget in the reserve were enough.

108. Ms Kanza pointed out that this was in line with the advice given by UNON.

109. The Standing Committee members adopted the budget 2005 and decided that the surplus of 41,847 USD should be used for the production of international reviews. 90,000 USD for the GEF project were to be taken from the reserve.

b) 2006 budget

110. Mr. Lenten presented the budget of 2006 (Annex 4 and 5). He explained that at MOP3 the budget had been split into three pillars, namely a core budget to be covered by the annual contributions of Parties, and a second and third pillar dealing with projects to be funded through voluntary contributions received from various sources. Regarding the latter, a second Trust Fund would be established. Also it had been decided that the budget would be held in Euro instead of USD. This decision had helped to avoid a deficit in salaries related to exchange rate losses as had been the case in the past. The Secretariat had been able to save money in budget line 1201 (English translators). The current deficit in the budget line 1601 (Travel on official business) would be covered by voluntary contributions which had been promised for travel to meetings. The deficit in budget line 5202 (Information material) would be compensated by a voluntary contribution regularly received from Germany for this purpose.

111. Mr. Lenten encouraged donors to make their voluntary contributions for a period of three years in advance which would not only save their time and energy but also time spent by the Secretariat in fundraising efforts.

112. Mr. Schall asked why the contribution from Germany for travel of delegates to the Technical Committee and to the Standing Committee did not appear in the QSL budget overview.

113. Mr. Lenten explained that in preparation of the Second Trust Fund this contribution had been booked to the budget line AWL 122000, which temporarily contained all voluntary contributions received which would, at a later stage, be transferred to the Second Trust Fund.

114. Mr. Lok asked what the Secretariat's expectations were for the end of the year regarding the financial situation of the Agreement, namely if money would be left over.

115. Mr. Lenten said he did not expect a shortfall. The Secretariat had the flexibility to move money from one budget line to another within the same groups. Only for allocating money from one group to another group did he need the approval of the Standing Committee. This approval was usually given by the Chairman of the Standing Committee in between meeting sessions. All in all there would be no over expenditure in the budget of 2006.

116. Mr. Lok reiterated the question already raised by Germany whether the 41,847 USD surplus from 2005 should not be used for the GEF project. Part of the money allocated for GEF in 2007 could then stay in the reserve.

117. Mr. Schall pointed out that after the Secretariat's and Ms Kanza's explanations his view was now that the money for GEF could be either taken from the surplus of 41,847 USD or from the reserve.

118. The Chairman advised caution in making this decision in order to avoid any hindrance in the Secretariat being able to continue with ongoing activities.

119. Ms Kanza reiterated that the problems related to the establishment of the Second Trust Fund would be solved by the end of the month.

120. Ms Oduk informed the participants that the new Executive Director of UNEP had formed a Taskforce which was currently reviewing the whole IMIS (Accounting) system.

121. On behalf of the Executive Secretary of CMS, Mr. Lenten asked the Standing Committee to endorse the decision of the CMS Standing Committee to upgrade the post of the Administrative and Fund Management Officer. He explained that five posts were supervised under this position. The Administrative and Fund Management Officer was a staff member of UNON and fully funded by UNEP. This post was not to be covered by the AEWA budget. Taking into account the growing responsibility of this position, currently a P-3 post, the CMS Standing Committee had already started the process to upgrade this post. The AEWA Standing Committee was now asked to endorse this decision.

122. Ms Oduk added that the process was already ongoing and that this decision would have no impact on the AEWA budget.

123. Mr. Schall explained that Germany gave its endorsement under the conditions discussed in the closed session during the CMS Standing Committee.

124. Mr. Lenten explained that the CMS Executive Secretary planned to make a bid for recycling the 13 % overheads paid on voluntary contributions into projects. He would also make the bid on behalf of AEWA.

125. Mr. Lok requested that the draft bid should first be discussed within the AEWA Standing Committee.

126. Ms Oduk clarified that all MEAs had to pay 13 % overheads to their income. This was therefore a question not only related to CMS and AEWA. The Executive Director of UNEP would have to look into this issue.

127. Mr. Lenten recommended supporting the request of the CMS Executive Secretary mentioned above.

128. The Standing Committee decided on the actions requested in document StC 4.9 as follows:

Item 1:

The Standing Committee approved the budgets of 2005 and 2006.

Item 2:

The Standing Committee approved the allocation of 90,000 USD from the reserve to the GEF project as provisionally foreseen in 2005.

Item 3:

The Standing Committee approved the allocation of 41,847 USD surplus in the AWL budget 2005 for drafting international reviews.

Item 4:

The Standing Committee urged the Executive Director of UNEP to establish the Second Trust Fund without further delay and to consider upgrading or replacing the IMIS system in order to provide the Secretariat with an adequate financial management mechanism.

Item 5:

The Standing Committee agreed in giving its endorsement for upgrading the post of the Administrative and Fund Management Officer from P-3 to P-4.

Item 6:

The Standing Committee decided to authorise the CMS Executive Secretary to make a bid on behalf of AEWa for recycling the overheads of 13 % paid on voluntary contributions into projects.

129. Mr Lenten introduced document StC 4.10 (Allocation of funds accrued through contributions of new Contracting Parties). Referring to Table 1, he explained that the contributions received for 2007 and 2008 were not reflected as these would be subject to the next session of the Standing Committee. He explained that an amount of \$ 18,550 received by new Contracting Parties for the period 2003-2005 had not yet been allocated during the course of the previous sessions of the Standing Committee.

130. Referring to Table 2 Mr. Lenten proposed allocating the remaining amount of \$ 18,555 (14,616 €) plus the amount of 162,134 € accrued in 2006 to the following projects: 50,000 € to 'Servicing the Meeting of the Parties'; 40,000 € to the 'Implementation of the African-Eurasian Flyways GEF Project'; 24,000 € to the 'Implementation of the Agreement', namely 12,000 € respectively to 'Consultancies regarding research surveys' and to the 'Development of International Species Action Plans'; 20,000 € to the 'Implementation of the Communication Strategy'; and finally 22,000 € to the 'Implementation of the International Implementation Priorities', namely 12,000 € to 'Species Conservation (coordination and implementation of Species Action Plans)' and 10,000 € for the 'Management of human activities'.

131. The Standing Committee approved the proposal of the Secretariat regarding the allocation of the funds accrued through contributions of new Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 17. Institutional matters

132. Referring to the already long-lasting cooperation between AEWa and OMPO, Mr. Lenten explained that the AEWa Secretariat planned to conclude a Memorandum of Cooperation with OMPO in 2007. This would be one of the tasks of the Programme Officer. Also the Secretariat wanted to establish cooperation with the CAFF Secretariat (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna). CAFF deals, amongst other things, with the conservation of seabirds, some of which are also covered by AEWa. Also the countries covered by CAFF are of importance for many other AEWa species. Joint work programmes with Wetlands International and Ramsar and intensive cooperation with CBD and the Bern Convention already exist. Regarding World Migratory Bird Day, the AEWa Secretariat had, also on behalf of CMS, started cooperating with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

133. Referring to Resolution 3.20 Mr. Lenten stressed that an improved cooperation with the African Union was an important issue. Unfortunately, the Government of Senegal was not present at this meeting to report back on the progress made.

134. Ms Kanza reported that CMS was also currently working on cooperation with the African Union and invited the AEWa Secretariat to join efforts in this respect.

Agenda item 18. Implementation of the Agreement and Action Plan

a) Synthesis of National Reports and Reports on phasing out lead shot for MOP3

135. Mr. Dereliev introduced the Documents StC 4.11 (Final synthesis of the National Reports received for MOP3) and 4.12 (Final synthesis of the Report on phasing out lead shot). He pointed out that MOP3 had invited Parties who had not done so, to submit their reports until end of 2005. The documents 4.11 and 4.12 reflected all reports received by mid February. The quantity of received reports had been good. However, due to the current national reporting format, the reports were not

easy to quantify and the Secretariat had encountered much work in producing the two syntheses.

136. Mr. Schall highlighted the importance of establishing a system which would allow the Parties to report back to the Secretariat more easily than it was currently the case.

Mr. Lenten pointed out that the planned online national reporting system would make the analysis of submitted information much easier as this would be done by the system itself. It would also be easier and much less time-consuming for Parties to report back to the Secretariat with the new system.

137. The Chairman remarked that under the current system there was much subjectivity in the analysis of submitted reports, which made it difficult to comment the synthesis.

138 Mr. Lok suggested it might be a good idea to make use of documents 4.11 and 4.12 for the development of the Strategic Plan.

139. Mr. Dereliev pointed out that the online national reporting system would have to be approved by MOP4 before using it. Therefore the current format would still have to be used for MOP4 regardless of the fact that the new format would be ready by the end of 2007.

140. The Standing Committee took note of documents 4.11 and 4.12 and requested the Secretariat to look further into the issue, which would be addressed again at the next MOP.

b) The development of an online national reporting system for AEWA and CMS

141. Mr. Lenten explained that the planned project to develop an online national reporting system was part of a much bigger project under UNEP in cooperation with WCMC on knowledge management among MEAs. The aim of the project was to link all strategic documents and databases produced, which are relevant to a number of MEAs. The budget for the whole project is 510,954 USD.

142. The AEWA Secretariat, also representing CMS, had participated in a workshop in Cambridge, UK; the new online reporting system component for AEWA and CMS within the larger Knowledge Management Project had been one of the outcomes of this workshop. Mr. Lenten stressed the importance of harmonising the reporting formats of CMS and AEWA, which would allow, for example, that information given to CMS to be merged into the AEWA template by the system.

143. As discussed with UNEP-WCMC, CMS would deliver its format in January 2007 and AEWA in February 2007. The Technical Officer was currently working on identifying gaps in the current format. The whole issue moreover had to be closely linked to the development of the AEWA Strategic Plan. The deadline agreed with UNEP-WCMC for the development of the new system was the end of 2007. The new system would then be submitted to MOP4 for adoption. However, the Secretariat would look for ways of using it prior to that by initiating test fillings by some countries in order to get experience with the new system, which would provide useful input for the discussions taking place at MOP4. The new system was expected to make the submission of national reports easier for Parties by avoiding duplication of information given to CMS and AEWA. USD 245,644 had been made available by UNEP for the development of this new system within the Knowledge Management Project, which meant that the system would not cost AEWA more than the staff time invested in this project by the Secretariat.

144. Mr. Bibic pointed out that the Bird Directive already had such an online reporting system, which might be useful to consider while developing the format for AEWA.

145. Mr. Schall remarked that the EC was working on an online reporting system together with the Bern Convention. This could also be taken into consideration.

b) Drafting of international reviews

146. Referring to Art. 7.4 of the AEWA Action Plan, Mr. Dereliev reported on the progress made regarding the production of the seven international reviews.

i) Report on the status and trends of populations

This review had been presented to MOP3. Thanks to cooperation with the EU a grant might be made available for the production of an update review, which would be prepared by Wetlands International.

ii) Review of gaps in information from surveys and review of the networks of sites used by each population, including reviews of the protection status of each site as well as of the management measures taken in each case

The production of these reviews is part of the WOW project. They are therefore not expected to be ready for MOP4.

iii) Review of pertinent hunting and trade legislation in each country relating to the species listed in Annex 2 to the Agreement

This review would be prepared by the AEWA Secretariat to be ready by the end of 2007.

iv) Review on the stage of preparation and implementation of single species action plans; Review on re-establishment projects; Review on the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof

These reviews would have to be contracted out to Consultants in 2007.

147. Mr. Dereliev suggested discussing the issue of the frequency of production of reviews at the next Standing Committee meeting, specifically, if some of the reviews could be produced less frequently than once in a triennium.

148. Mr. Schall remarked that in case of Eurobats it had been decided by the Parties to meet every four years instead of once in a triennium. He did not suggest doing the same in case of AEWA, but that the production of international reviews at less frequent intervals was worth considering.

149. Mr. Lenten pointed out that the issue of producing international reviews should not be mixed up with the submission of national reports. International reviews were comprehensive analysis documents which needed additional efforts. Such documents could be considered to be produced less frequently. National reports, however, should be submitted to each Meeting of the Parties. He promised that the Secretariat would make a proposal at the next Standing Committee meeting concerning the frequency of producing international reviews. Some of the reviews would have been drafted by that time and the Standing Committee could on the basis of these drafts decide if they could be produced less frequently.

Agenda item 19. Adoption of Single Species Action Plans

a) Action Plan for the Maccao Duck

150. Mr. Dereliev introduced Document StC 4.13 (Maccao Duck Action Plan). He pointed out that the Maccao Duck was the first inter-African migrant for which an Action Plan had been developed under AEWA. AEWA had become an authority for drafting single species action plans and had also had a leading role in the process of drafting this one for the Maccao Duck. In early 2005 a workshop on the development of the Action Plan for the Maccao Duck had taken place in South Africa. The presented draft document was the final outcome of this process of consultation with all stakeholders involved. With the approval of the Standing Committee the implementation of this Action Plan could

be started.

151. Mr. Schall suggested that it might be useful if the Secretariat provided an overview concerning AEWA species to make clear which of the species urgently needed an Action Plan, so that e.g. a 15-year strategy could be developed to decide which Action Plans should have priority in future.

152. Mr. Dereliev drew the Committee's attention to Art. 2.2.1 of the AEWA Action Plan according to which single species action plans for populations listed in Category 1 of Column A of Table 1 should be developed and implemented as a priority; thus a priority list already exists. Referring to the fairly high number of populations listed in Category 1, he explained that the Secretariat, however, was planning to produce an overview in which it would set priorities among those populations. This document would, of course, only be an assessment of the Secretariat for internal use. He also explained that it was very difficult to make a prioritisation for a longer time-frame (15 years), due to the fact that the table was to be updated every three years, which resulted in some populations being shifted between Column A and B.

153. The Standing Committee approved the Action Plan for the Maccao Duck.

154. Mr. Dereliev said that the approval of Single Species Action Plans through the Standing Committee might become a more common practice in future. Furthermore, he reported on the Single Species Action Plans, which had been adopted since AEWA had been established, namely two of them at MOP2 and 5 at MOP3.

155. He continued with reporting on the progress made concerning the implementation of these existing Single Species Action Plans, which had been developed under AEWA as well as of others, where only AEWA was involved.

b) Single Species Action Plan for the Red-breasted Goose

156. A full-time Coordinator entered on duty as of 1 July 2006 co-funded by AEWA.

c) Single Species Action Plans for the Sociable Lapwing and for the Black-winged Pratincole

157. A full-time Coordinator entered on duty as of 1 September 2006, co-funded by AEWA.

d) Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose

158. The Secretariat worked closely with the EU on the implementation of this Action Plan. Apart from Norway all member states to the Action Plan were also part of the EU.

159. Moreover, the process of establishing mechanisms of implementation had started for the Single Species Action Plans for the Great Snipe, the Ferruginous Duck, the White-headed Duck, the Light-bellied Brent Goose, the Corncrake and the Northern Bald Ibis.

160. Mr. Dereliev continued with reporting on progress made concerning the development of new single species action plans.

e) Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser Flamingo

161. The development of this Action Plan had been started at a workshop, which took place in Kenya, September 2006. A first draft was planned for early 2007 and would probably be ready for approval by the Standing Committee at its next meeting.

f) Single Species Action Plans for the Black-tailed Godwit and the Eurasian Spoonbill

162. The development of Action Plans for the Black-tailed Godwit and the Spoonbill were being

discussed with the EU. Agreement on funding of these Action Plans had been reached with Vogelbescherming Netherlands and the drafting process would start in 2007.

g) Single Species Action Plan for the Icelandic Population of the Whooper Swan

163. Mr. Dereliev reported that this Action Plan would be developed under the legal framework of AEWA with funding from WWT. The drafting process was expected to start in 2007.

h) Single Species Action Plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose

164. The development of this Action Plan had started many years ago with financial support from the UK and the Netherlands. A scientific study regarding the measures of conservation to be taken would be finalised by the end of February 2007. The difficulty of this Action Plan was the issue of hunting. A final draft of the Action Plan was expected to be ready for MOP4.

165. Moreover, Mr. Dereliev reported that AEWA and CMS were planning to develop Action Plans for two inter-African migrants; most probably the White-winged Flufftail and the Madagascar Pond Heron, with funds CMS expects to receive from Italy. Draft Action Plans could be ready for submission to MOP4. Mr. Dereliev suggested that part of the money could also be used for synergetic work with the EU to update existing Action Plans such as the one for the Slender-billed Curlew.

166. Finally, Mr Dereliev mentioned that funds for the development of Action Plans for the Shoebill and the Slaty Egret were still lacking. Concerning the Shoebill good progress had been made in the sense of mobilising the network. In the frame of the workshop on the development of an Action Plan for the Lesser Flamingo some of the participants had also discussed the possibility of drafting an Action Plan for the Shoebill. Holding approximately 80 % of the population, Sudan would be a key country in this process.

167. Mr. Dereliev also reported that the Secretariat was in discussion with Botswana concerning the development of an Action Plan for the Slaty Egret. This process could also be a good opportunity to convince Botswana to become a Contracting Party to the Agreement.

168. The Standing Committee took note of Mr. Dereliev's report and urged Contracting Parties to develop national action plans for the species occurring in their countries.

Agenda item 20. Date and venue of the next meeting of the Standing Committee

169. The Standing Committee agreed to meet end of November 2007 in Bonn, Germany. Mr. Lenten made a strong plea to the representatives present to invite other members of the Standing Committee to attend the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

Agenda item 21. Any other business

170. Mr. Lenten suggested that due to the increasing membership to AEWA MOP4 might also have to consider increasing the Standing Committee in order to achieve a better representation. He pointed out that the Standing Committee played a very important role, namely by providing guidance to the Secretariat between the Meetings of the Parties. The Secretariat would therefore prepare a proposal on this issue for the next Standing Committee.

171. Mr. Lenten also mentioned that the Technical Committee had developed an internal work plan and established ten working groups which would be in charge of the different tasks of the Technical Committee. He suggested that something similar could be done in the case of the Standing Committee. Membership development was still an important issue for AEWA. He therefore invited the Standing Committee members to work on this in their respective regions and to help convince their neighbour countries to join the Agreement. In addition, two Standing Committee members, namely Germany and Tanzania, would join the TC working group in charge of developing a Strategic

Plan for AEWA.

172. The Standing Committee agreed with all points raised by Mr. Lenten.

173. Finally, Mr. Schall suggested making 2009 the “year” of an AEWA bird.

Agenda item 22. Closure of the meeting

174. Mr. Lenten thanked the Standing Committee for the very good working spirit and expressed his appreciation to Slovenia for attending the meeting as an observer for the first time. Moreover, he thanked the German government for having generously organised the launch of the WOW project and for considering extending the term of the JPO to a third year, which would be very important not only for the communication work of AEWA, but also for the implementation of the WOW project. Finally, he expressed his gratitude to the government of the Netherlands for considering their support of the WOW project with a financial contribution.

175. On behalf of the participants, the Chairman thanked the German government for hosting the launching event of the WOW project. He also expressed thanks to the Secretariat for its excellent work and achievements since MOP3 and thanked all the participants for their valuable contributions and cooperation within the last two days.

Annex 1

4th STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING / 4^{ième} RÉUNION DU COMITÉ PERMANENT 20 - 21 November 2006, Bonn, Germany

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Annex 2



United Nations Environment Programme

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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

STATEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR, DELC TO THE 4th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA)

Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany
20-21 November 2006

On behalf of Mr. Bakary Kante, Director, Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak here today at the opening of the fourth Standing Committee Meeting of the Agreement on the Conservation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds. Mr. Kante sends his best wishes for the meeting and warmly thanks the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for hosting this important event.

Due to other commitments, Mr. Kante is unfortunately not able to be with us today. Therefore, he has asked me to deliver his statement.

Dear Colleagues

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate AEWA who currently has 59 Parties-- the largest agreement developed so far under the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS). It is gratifying that you have chosen the right framework in which to carry out this worthy goal. The Convention on Migratory Species is expressly designed to foster regional co-operation, and to intervene where necessary to ensure the protection of endangered species. Through this Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, CMS aims to conserve these remarkable species, which have roamed our flyways for millions of years.

As you all know, although this Agreement only entered into force a few years ago, its implementation is well underway. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the countries who have continuously supported the implementation of AEWA. I am also pleased to note that in addition, the GEF council approved the African-Eurasian Flyways Project (now renamed as *Wings over Wetlands (WOW)*) in November 2003 and its implementation started in July 2006. The project's aim is to improve the conservation status of migratory waterbirds by enhancing and coordinating efforts to conserve some of the key wetland areas along the main bird migration routes (flyways) across the three continents.

In light of the foregoing, I would encourage the Range States who have not yet become Contracting Parties to the Agreement to do so. Your commitment and support to the Agreement is crucial in order for it to expand further and in order for us to better protect migratory waterbirds across Africa and Eurasia.

Dear Colleagues

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development nations committed to the year 2010 as the target date for achieving a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biological diversity. We must not fail to achieve this 2010 target, which is only four years down the road. There is therefore need for all countries, institutions and organisations - indeed all stakeholders in the global biodiversity agenda including AEWA, to demonstrate and disseminate measurable success attained by 2010, so that political commitment becomes evident and public confidence and interest in the biodiversity arena enhanced. This will not only encourage investment in biodiversity Research and Development (R & D) as well as management, but will also strengthen the various environmental institutions, at all levels.

Three days ago, in Nairobi, Kenya, the UNFCCC concluded its COP-12, which also addressed major issues, pertinent to CMS, the CBD and other biodiversity-related MEAs, since the causes and impacts of climate change on biodiversity and vice versa are closely interlinked and cannot be addressed in isolation.

Dear Colleagues

Early this year CMS and AEWA in collaboration with UNEP convened an expert seminar to discuss avian influenza virus and related issues. We need to now ask ourselves - what can we do on the environmental front to complement the vital work being done by other organizations on avian flu, including; the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)? Blaming avian flu on bird migrations is misleading. And a 'quick fix' of culling migratory birds is certainly not the solution. Traditional methods of control including culling of infected poultry, vaccination may temporarily contain the situation. But the truth is that unless we work to re-establish a proper management human interference with nature we will see similar viruses and other infectious agents emerge again and again.

By investing in wetland conservation and rehabilitation, for instance, countries can help keep migratory species away from farmland, as well as glean the many other benefits, such as water storage and purification, that such intact ecosystems offer to human society. We obviously cannot do this alone. Partners from throughout the UN system, including specialized agencies, such as OIE, FAO and WHO, the biodiversity-related conventions and the NGOs need to work even more closely together.

Dear Colleagues

In June 2006, UNEP in cooperation with the CITES Secretariat convened a meeting in Cambridge in the United Kingdom to launch a project on knowledge management for biodiversity-related conventions and Agreements in which AEWA also participated representing the CMS family. Participants identified several categories of information and data that could be made interoperable among them. The idea behind this project, is to build capacity to manage a harmonized information system. UNEP is therefore contributing \$200,000 from its Government of Norway trust fund to enable the secretariats to implement the joint project on Knowledge Management for Biodiversity.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate AEWA together with CMS for inaugurating in April 2006 the 'World Migratory Bird Day'. This event carried out in Kenya has gone along way to promote public awareness and education on migratory birds as well as their ecological importance. I am pleased to note that the theme of the event was 'Migratory Birds need our support now' has come at a time when these creatures are at the centre of global attention. Also timely is the next year's theme on "Climate and impact on migratory species".

UNEP fully supports the activities in support of implementing AEWA and above all we are happy with the new initiatives to protect migratory species. UNEP stands ready to give technical advice which is in line with our current focus in support of implementing the Bali Strategic Plan. But as said earlier more needs to be done and to that effect additional funds are required from new as well as existing stakeholders. I congratulate AEWA for its efforts to fund raise outside the existing donor base. When doing fund raising we have to be more creative and innovative. As we all know, there is a lot of competition and the funds available for our activities are decreasing.

Once again I reiterate that UNEP stands ready to support the work of AEWA. There is work to be done, and time is short. I wish you every success and fruitful outcomes from your deliberations during this important meeting.

Thank you
