



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS



7th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
4-8 December 2018, Durban, South Africa

“Beyond 2020: Shaping flyway conservation for the future”

**REPORT OF THE 7th SESSION OF
THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES (MOP7)
TO THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRD AGREEMENT (AEWA),
4-8 DECEMBER 2018, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA**

Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The **Chair of AEWA MOP6** (Bonn, Germany, 2015) **Dr Fernando Spina**, acted as Chair until the Chair and Vice-Chair of MOP7 had been elected. He drew attention to the tasks and opportunities faced by delegates in the coming days, and thanked the Government of South Africa and the Municipality of Durban for hosting the meeting.
2. The **Chair** handed over to the **Director General of the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa, Ms Nosipho Ngcaba**, to facilitate the opening ceremony. Ms Ngcaba acknowledged the Secretariats of CMS and AEWA for their role in organizing the meeting, and welcomed all delegates to South Africa. She recalled that the first AEWA MOP had taken place in Cape Town, and expressed the hope that a clear agenda for action during 2019-2027 would emerge from the present meeting.
3. The **Deputy Chair of the Office of the Mayor of Ethekwini Municipality, Councillor M. Madlala, speaking on behalf of the Mayor, Councillor Z. Gumede**, welcomed all participants to the city of Durban. He described AEWA as a collective campaign to protect species whose welfare was very closely linked to that of our own species, and said that the decline of waterbird numbers in Durban Bay should be a call to action.
4. A video message from the **Acting Head of UN Environment, Ms Joyce Msuya**, was screened. She drew particular attention to the climate resilient flyways project, and hoped the principles of conservation, coexistence and communication would guide proceedings during MOP7.
5. The **Chair** read out a statement from the **Executive Secretary of CMS, Mr Bradnee Chambers**, who was unable to participate in MOP7. Mr Chambers thanked the Government of South Africa for its generosity in hosting the meeting, and drew attention to the findings of the 7th edition of the AEWA Conservation Status Report that good governance was the most important predictor of healthy waterbird populations. Waterbirds played a crucial role in sustaining healthy wetland systems and livelihoods.
6. The **Executive Secretary of AEWA, Dr Jacques Trouvilliez**, recalled the deep respect for nature shown by Nelson Mandela, and the challenge of Mahatma Gandhi for each individual to act as agents for positive change in the world. MOP7 represented a crucial stage in the development of the Agreement, which would determine what could be achieved in the following ten years through adoption of the Strategic Plan and the Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027.
7. A video showcasing the wonders of KwaZulu-Natal was screened.

8. A keynote address was given by the **Member of the Executive Council (MEC), Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Sihle Zikalala**. He drew attention to the importance of migratory species as indicators of global climate change and habitat degradation. He further emphasized the commitment to nature conservation in South Africa through broad partnerships. He hoped for fruitful deliberations and strong outcomes for the meeting.

AEWA Waterbird Conservation Award Presentation Ceremony (Agenda item 8)

9. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit), introduced the Waterbird Conservation Awards ceremony. This was the fifth occasion on which the AEWA Awards had been presented. A call for nominations had been launched in March 2018, with a deadline in early June 2018. The winners had been selected by the Standing Committee at its 13th meeting in July 2018, as follows:

Institutional category:

The Nature Conservation Sector of the Egyptian Department of the Environment, represented by Mr Ayman Ahmed.

Individual category:

Mr Ohad Hatzofe – Israel.

10. Each of the recipients received an Award Certificate presented by the Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee and a signed waterbird photograph presented by the AEWA Executive Secretary. The recipients made brief remarks thanking all those who had supported the work for which they were being honoured.

11. Mr Dereliev introduced a special award, that of **Honorary Patron of AEWA**, to **Mr David Stroud** (United Kingdom) who would be retiring in 2019. Mr Stroud had served AEWA in many capacities throughout its existence and was more than deserving of this very rare title. There was only one existing Honorary Patron Mr Gerard Boere, and Mr Dereliev read a statement from Mr Boere congratulating Mr Stroud.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

12. The **Chair** referred the meeting to document AEWA/MOP 7.2 *Rules of Procedure* and opened the floor to comments. There being no requests for the floor, the **MOP** adopted the Rules of Procedure by consensus.

Agenda item 3. Election of Officers

13. The **Chair** recalled that, in accordance with Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure, a Chair and one or more Vice-Chairs were to be elected. He invited nominations from the floor.

14. **Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, nominated the Republic of South Africa as Chair of MOP7.

15. **Norway** nominated Uganda to be Vice-Chair.

16. The **MOP** elected by acclamation South Africa as Chair and Uganda as Vice-Chair of MOP7.

17. Taking his place on the podium, **the representative of South Africa, Mr Shonisani Munzhedzi, Deputy Director General for Biodiversity and Conservation, Department of Environmental Affairs**, thanked the meeting for its trust in electing him to Chair the week's proceedings.

Agenda item 4. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

18. The **Chair** introduced Documents AEWA/MOP 7.3 *Provisional Agenda* and AEWA/MOP 7.4 Rev.2 *Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule*. He opened the floor to proposals for revisions or additions. There being no such interventions, the meeting adopted the two Documents as presented.

19. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit) presented a brief overview of the meeting schedule and the procedure for handling in-session documents, including the electronic submission of statements, interventions and proposed amendments to Draft Resolutions.

20. The **Chair** invited any Party that planned to raise points under Agenda item 30 *Any Other Business*, to make this known by the morning of Wednesday 5 December, so that other Parties and the Secretariat could complete any preparatory work required in good time.

Agenda item 5. Establishment of Credentials Committee and Sessional Committees

21. The **Chair** recalled that establishment of a Credentials Committee was a requirement of Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure. He invited nominations from the floor and noted that the work of the Committee would be supported by the Secretariat.

22. **Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, nominated Algeria and Ghana to serve on the Credentials Committee.

23. The **United Kingdom** and the **Netherlands** indicated their willingness to serve on the Credentials Committee.

24. **The MOP** approved by consensus the establishment of a Credentials Committee composed of Algeria, Ghana, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, with support from the Secretariat (Ms Catherine Lehmann, Executive Management Support Officer).

25. The **Chair** recalled that it was proposed there should be two Sessional Working Groups: one (WG1) dealing with Scientific and Technical matters; the other (WG2) dealing with Financial and Administrative matters. He invited nominations for the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the two Working Groups.

26. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, nominated the United Kingdom, represented by Mr David Stroud, as Chair of WG1 on Scientific and Technical matters.

27. **Uganda**, supported by **Iceland** and **Estonia**, nominated Norway, represented by Mr. Øystein Størkersen, as Chair of WG2 on Financial and Administrative matters.

28. **Uganda** nominated Ethiopia as Vice-Chair of WG1 on Scientific and Technical matters and Kenya as Vice-Chair of WG2 on Financial and Administrative matters.

29. The **MOP** approved by acclamation the nominations for the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the two Working Groups.

Agenda item 6. Admission of Observers

30. The **Chair** introduced Document AEWA/MOP 7.5 Rev.1 *Admission of Observers*. He noted that this listed non-Party Range States, intergovernmental organizations, international NGOs, national NGOs and other observers. He invited interventions from the floor.

31. There being no such interventions, and in accordance with Rules 6 and 7 of the Rules of Procedure, **the MOP** decided by consensus to admit as Observers all those countries and organisations listed in document AEWA/MOP 7.5 Rev.1.

Agenda item 7. Opening Statements

32. The **Chair** noted that written opening statements from Contracting Parties, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations would appear in the proceedings of the meeting. He invited a representative of the Africa group and a representative of the EU to present brief opening remarks.

33. The representative of **Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, made the following statement:

“On behalf of the Africa Contracting Parties to AEWA, I wish to congratulate the people and Government of the Republic of South Africa on hosting AEWA MOP7 in this beautiful city of Durban. I congratulate you MOP7 Chair, upon your election.

Since the MOP is being held in the Africa Region, I wish to welcome the rest of the AEWA Regions to beautiful Africa.

Africa looks at MOP7 with optimism that this MOP will indeed shape flyway conservation for the future. As the world looks at striking a new deal for nature beyond 2020, we should in this meeting strike a new deal for migratory waterbirds that will be part of the global new deal for nature.

The Africa region remains committed to the tenets and objectives of AEWA and to that end calls upon all Parties to work towards maintaining migratory waterbirds in a favourable conservation status. To this end, we call upon all Parties to support approval and financing of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa, which is a blueprint for waterbird conservation in Africa.

As we move towards adopting the new deal for migratory water birds in the form of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, we need to commit reasonable resources to support implementation.

We know that the economic situation globally may not be the best. However, losing migratory waterbirds may actually worsen the economic situation since these are a source of livelihoods and in some cases source of direct economic development.

The 7th edition of the Conservation Status Review indicates a mixed positive and negative performance. What is clear, however, is that we can achieve a net positive conservation outcome if we strive for waterbirds within the framework of AEWA.

The region looks forward to meaningful engagements throughout MOP7, with the aim of making a positive difference in the conservation status of migratory waterbirds.”

34. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“In this meeting, Estonia, as an acting Presidency of the Council of the European Union on behalf of Austria, has the honour to be speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Government of South Africa for its generosity and hospitality in hosting this meeting and for the very warm welcome we have all received from the local authorities and the people of Durban.

The slogan of the meeting is “Beyond 2020: shaping flyway conservation for the future”. It reflects beautifully a central objective of the meeting – the approval of the new Strategic Plan for 2019 to 2027.

The EU is committed to the conservation of migratory waterbirds and has strong dedicated legislation – the EU Birds Directive – providing for their conservation and sustainable use in its Member States. However, AEWa is a critically important instrument for us in the EU to strengthen collaboration along the flyways, including with our African partners, for our shared heritage of waterbirds, and we therefore welcome in particular the new Action Plan for Africa.

AEWA MOP7 here in Durban will give an important input to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework through these strategic documents. We look forward to working with all Parties on an ambitious but realistic and achievable follow-up to the current Strategic Plan, taking into account the lessons learnt from the previous period. This decision should provide for making real progress towards achieving the objectives of our Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as strong commitments of Parties and all other relevant stakeholders to spur its implementation. Through such action we will significantly advance the conservation and restoration of biodiversity and the vital life-support services it provides. As 2020 is just around the corner we need to make every effort to achieve our agreed goals. The EU and its Member States are fully committed to this process.

The EU and its Member States welcome the work that has been carried out on the International Single Species Action and Management Plans. These will provide an important framework for the conservation of key migratory waterbird species and the habitats that they depend upon throughout their annual migration cycles.

We look forward to working with other Contracting Parties and different stakeholder groups in order to make significant progress on the conservation of migratory waterbirds.

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks and congratulations to the Secretariat, the Technical Committee and the Standing Committee for all their work in preparing for this MOP. We are looking forward to engaging actively and constructively in the discussions over the coming days to ensure that this 7th Meeting of the Parties is a success that delivers tangible results. The agenda for this MOP provides a real opportunity for a meaningful and successful outcome. It is in our hands to achieve this goal.”

Agenda item 8. AEWA Waterbird Conservation Award Presentation Ceremony

35. This Agenda item was incorporated into the opening ceremony.

Agenda item 9. Reports

a. Standing Committee

36. The **Chair of the Standing Committee, Uganda, represented by Mr Barirega Akankwasah**, presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.6 *Report of the Standing Committee* which had only very recently been uploaded to the MOP7 website.

37. The **Chair** opened the floor for comments or questions.

38. **Norway** was concerned by the late availability of Document AEWA/MOP 7.6 and called for strict adherence in future to the Rules of Procedure concerning the circulation of MOP documents to Parties.

b. Technical Committee

39. The **Chair of the Technical Committee**, Dr Saulius Svazas, presented Document UNEP/AEWA/MOP 7.7 Rev.1 *Report of the Technical Committee* which outlined the Committee's activities in the triennium since MOP6.

40. **Israel**, supported by **Norway**, thanked the Chair and members of the Technical Committee (TC) for their efforts. It was difficult to believe that such a small group could produce such an extensive and high-quality body of work.

41. **The Chair of the TC** stressed that the 20 MOP7 Documents and 8 Draft Resolutions resulting from the TC's work would be evaluated and finalised over the coming days.

42. **South Africa** asked whether there was a linkage between the TC and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

43. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit) clarified that AEWA provided input to the IPBES process through the CMS Family in a coordinated manner. The Chair of the CMS Scientific Council had direct input through the work of the Secretariat in Bonn.

c. Depositary

44. The **Netherlands** introduced Document UNEP/AEWA/MOP 7.8 *Report of the Depositary*.

45. The **MOP** took note of the report; there were no questions or comments from the floor.

d. Secretariat

46. The **Executive Secretary** presented document AEWA/MOP 7.9 Corr. 1 *Report of the Secretariat* covering the activities of the Secretariat since MOP6.

47. The **MOP** took note of the report.

48. **South Africa** remarked that much had been achieved, but much still needed to be done due to the constraints of human resources and heavy reliance on voluntary funds. It would be important to know what plans were in place to ensure stability of human and financial resources in future.

49. The **Executive Secretary** expressed pride in his dedicated staff, but warned that a limit was being reached in terms of the Secretariat's capacity. Additional activities had been permitted by increases in voluntary contributions; everything appeared to be growing except the core budget. He would be insisting on the need for an increase in the budget during discussion under item 25 later in the agenda.

50. **Norway** drew attention to the new format of the report from the Secretariat, and suggested that when such changes were made to the format of documents, they should be circulated for comment.

51. The **Executive Secretary** thanked Norway for highlighting the more appealing nature of the report. The Standing Committee had agreed on the need for this, and the report would now be more suited to posting on the website for a more general audience, and also to use for fundraising to attract potential donors. UNEP was increasing its engagement with the private sector, and this report represented a first attempt to facilitate this for AEWA.

e. UNEP

52. **The representative of UNEP** gave a report on the activities of UNEP in relation to AEWA in the preceding triennium.

53. The **MOP** took note of the report; there were no questions or comments from the floor.

Agenda item 10. Report on the Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009 – 2018

54. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit) presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.10 *Final Report on the Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018*.

55. **Estonia, on behalf of the European Union and its Member States** made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States welcome the effort made by the Secretariat to compile the data for the Strategic Plan that is showing that efforts need to be intensified in order to reach the goals laid out in the Action Plan.

The EU and its Member States welcome the progress made during the last nine years, in particular in terms of capacity building and awareness raising. However, we are concerned by the fact that the goal of the 2009-2018 AEWA Strategic Plan has been assessed as highly insufficiently achieved.

Going forward, the EU and its Member States consider that a key focus of the 2019-2027 Strategic Action Plan should be actions that will directly address the drivers of decline of species in unfavourable conservation status.”

56. **South Africa** observed that the report would provide useful guidance for the 2019-2027 Strategic Plan. Implementation of the future Strategic Plan would require increased resources and cooperation to allow successful implementation.

57. The representative of **Ethiopia** asked what specific lessons had been learned in the process of implementing the Strategic Plan. He then compared the level of implementation of AEWA targets with those achieved under the Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which, at over 50 per cent were considerably higher, and asked for the reason for this discrepancy.

58. **Mr Dereliev** responded that the lessons learned were included in the report. There was an extensive list of recommendations concerning areas where more effort was needed. All lessons learned had been applied in the process of developing the new Strategic Plan.

59. Regarding the discrepancy between the level of implementation of the Aichi Targets and AEWA targets, one explanation was that the Aichi Targets were very broad in scope, whilst AEWA was very much more specific. The quality of national reporting had a major impact on the level of assessment possible, and this needed to be addressed during the period of the next Strategic Plan.

60. **OMPO** acknowledged the Secretariat for presenting an impressive report but regretted that it had not been available in time in French.

61. **Mr Dereliev** also regretted this omission; it was a matter of capacity and resources. These were the realities and the Secretariat was constantly striving to do as much as it could.

62. At the invitation of the Chair, **Mr David Stroud** briefly presented Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP DR2 Rev.1 *AEWA's contribution to delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets and the relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals*.

63. **South Africa** raised the issue of the alignment or incorporation of the SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets into the activities of AEWA. It was unfortunate that the previous Strategic Plan had been adopted prior to the adoption of both the Aichi Targets and the SDGs, and it looked as if the next Strategic Plan would be adopted before the post-2020 global framework for biodiversity had been agreed. There was a danger of reduced relevance in the absence of alignment with such global frameworks.

64. The **Chair** noted the relevance of this issue to Agenda item 15.

65. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States recognize the work done by the Technical and Standing Committees, and welcome the adoption of the Resolution as an important contribution to delivering the Aichi 2020 biodiversity targets.

The EU and its Member States would also like to stress that targets set by the Action Plan should primarily focus on declining waterbird populations.

Two actions of France concerning AEWA's contributions in the triennium 2016-2018 should be added to Annex 2, as follows:

Amendments:

Annex 2: page 29, target 14, column "AEWA's contribution in the triennium 2016-2018": *Inception of the implementation of FAO / FFEM / EU RESSOURCE project in Sahel and Nile Valley wetlands*; and on page 32, target 19, "AEWA's past contribution (1999-2015)" column: CSN Tool, Flyway Training Kit *and ONCFS quadrilingual CR-Rom* published.”

66. **Norway** echoed the statement of colleagues from the EU. It was important to focus on the mandate of AEWA, which could consider matters related to different species in detail. When these related to training and capacity building, there were a number of international activities that would comprise major inputs to capacity building.

67. **Mr Stroud** responded to the intervention of South Africa by agreeing that it was unfortunate that the timetables of different international processes were rarely perfectly aligned. The Draft Resolution in question was forward looking, particularly in Annexes 2 and 3, which matched AEWA with the SDGs.

Agenda item 11 Report on the Implementation of the African Initiative and the Plan of Action for Africa 2012 – 2018

68. The **Secretariat** (Ms Evelyn Moloko, Coordinator for the African Initiative) presented document AEWA/MOP 7.11 *Report on the Implementation of the AEWA African Initiative and AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2018*.

69. The **Executive Secretary** recalled the signature in 2006 of a Memorandum of Understanding between AEWA and three regional training institutions in Africa to enhance awareness of waterbird conservation. Following the screening of a short video showcasing the corresponding work of these institutions, he invited their representatives, along with a representative of France, as host of the Technical Support Unit for the African Initiative, to the stage.

70. **The representative of France** (Mr François Lamarque) presented telescopes and tripods, as part of a partnership with the Kite Foundation, to the representatives of each training institution as follows:

- Dr Samuel Christian Tsakem, Deputy Director, Ecole de Faune de Garoua, Cameroon;
- Dr Hamadi Dulle, Head of Wildlife Management Department of Mweka College of African Wildlife Management (United Republic of Tanzania);
- Mr Solomon Kyalo, AEWA National Focal Point, and Ms Catherine Wambari Wekesa, Manager of Lake Nakuru National Park, on behalf of Kenya Wildlife Service Naivasha Training Institute.

71. **The Executive Secretary** noted that the Secretariat had also signed an agreement with a Belgian company, Sights of Nature, which would be providing two pairs of binoculars to each of the three training institutions; one to the best student in ornithology and the second for training of students.

72. The **Chair** invited comments and questions from the floor concerning Ms Moloko's presentation.

73. **Egypt** appreciated the presentation, but had only been able to find North Africa mentioned in relation to World Migratory Bird Day. It would be helpful to hear reflections on this.

74. **Ms Moloko** indicated that further information was provided under other agenda items, including item 13 on Implementation of the AEWA Communications Strategy.

75. The **Central African Republic** called for active support from the Secretariat to help build the capacities of new Parties in Africa, for example in preparing national plans and actions to implement the Agreement.

76. The **Chair of the TC** noted that the African Initiative was an example of how a small group of experts and a dedicated leader could achieve so much, even with modest funding. This was perhaps a model to be applied in other regions, for example in South West Asia.

77. **Ms Moloko** hoped that implementation would be further enhanced in future; the Secretariat would continue to do its best to secure resources for implementation, but this would depend on Parties at both flyway and national levels.

78. The following written statement was received from **Estonia on behalf of the EU and its Member States**:

“The EU and its Member States welcome the report highlighting activities implemented in the framework of the AEWA African Initiative and the Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2018. We appreciate the critical role that AEWA is playing in supporting the conservation of waterbirds in Africa. The EU and its Member States are pleased to have been able to financially support some of these projects in Africa under the European Commission Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) programme and other initiatives. This report underlines the strategic importance of the next Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027 in achieving the goals of AEWA.”

Agenda item 12. Analysis and Synthesis of National Reports

79. **Ms Kelly Malsch, Head of Species Programme, UNEP-WCMC**, presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.12 *Analysis of the AEWA National Reports for the triennium 2015-2017*.

80. The **Chair** opened the floor to comments and questions.

81. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States** made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States recognize the work done by the Secretariat in analysing the National Reports on the implementation of AEWA for the period 2015-2017. We welcome this document as an important instrument to enhance work on migratory waterbird populations. Despite the improvements from one triennium to the other during the period 2009-2018, some targets of the last triennium are far from being reached. Therefore, the EU and its Member States would invite Parties to use the main lessons from the National Reports to increase the effectiveness of the next AEWA Strategic Plan.”

82. **Ms Malsch** concurred with the importance of applying lessons learned.

83. **The Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Compliance and Implementation Unit) underlined that only 12 per cent of Parties had reported full legal protection of AEWA Column A populations. Thus there was a high level of non-compliance with treaty provisions. This needed addressing seriously and thought might be needed about increasing capacity to assist Parties with compliance issues.

Agenda item 13. Report on the Implementation of the Communication Strategy

84. **Mr Florian Keil, Coordinator of the Joint Communication Team of the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats**, presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.13 *Report on the Implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy*.

85. The **Chair** opened the floor for comments and questions.

86. **Switzerland** welcomed the efforts made to enhance coordination within the CMS Family and considered that the Joint Communication Team provided a good example of synergies.

Agenda item 14. International Reviews

87. **Mr Szabolcs Nagy, Senior Advisor, Wetlands International**, presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.14 Corr.1 *Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area – Seventh Edition (CSR7)*.

88. The **MOP** took note of CSR7.

89. The **Chair** opened the floor for comments and questions.

90. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States welcome the collaborative effort of Wetlands International, BirdLife International, Sovon, the Goose Specialist Group, RDF Conservation and the CAFF Bird Group in preparing the 7th edition of the *Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area*, which underlines the importance of AEWA for the conservation of migratory waterbirds.

This report clearly shows that good governance is the most important determinant of the trend of waterbird populations. The EU and its Member States reaffirm that achieving AEWA’s targets and ensuring its contribution to the Aichi Targets and Sustainable Development Goals require the adoption of proactive strategies that integrate bird conservation into a wide range of other land use policies. We look forward to being informed about proposals for such proactive strategies.

The EU and its Member States also reaffirm the importance and value of continuing to deliver species recovery and action plans to positively influence the trend of waterbird populations in the long term.

Given that marine species, in particular, show considerable declines, more dedication to abolishing the reasons for these declines appears necessary.

We also welcome recognition in the report of the key contribution of the Article 12 report under the Birds Directive to the AEWA Conservation Status Report.”

91. **Israel** warmly welcomed CSR7 but sought clarification on two points: first, the trend of the indicator under Goal 8 and secondly the apparent contradiction between the trends shown by the AEWA waterbird indicator and the IUCN Red List.

92. **Mr Nagy** replied that the original indicator under Goal 8 was “fewer populations to be listed in Column A”. Over the years there had actually been an increase, so the trend had developed in the opposite direction to that desired. With regard to the apparent discrepancy between the tendencies shown by the AEWA and IUCN Red List indicators, the reason was that the Red List indicator only included populations that by definition had a poor conservation status, whereas the AEWA waterbird indicator included all 554 waterbird populations in the region, regardless of their conservation status.

93. **South Africa** underlined that the information presented could provide useful inputs to development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Convention on Biological Diversity was currently preparing the 5th edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook; this constituted a specific opportunity for AEWA to contribute data.

Agenda item 15. Adoption of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019 – 2027

94. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance), introduced Document AEWA/MOP 7.15 *Draft AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027*.

95. **Switzerland** congratulated AEWA on the new Strategic Plan and particularly welcomed the step-wise approach to actions from MOP to MOP, as well as the provision of specific indicators for monitoring effectiveness of implementation. However, Switzerland was concerned that, on one hand the Strategic Plan was very ambitious, whilst on the other hand the necessary resources for implementation were not secured, placing the future of the Agreement at risk. Switzerland called on all Parties to consider a core budget increase in the upcoming discussions.

96. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States recognize the work done by the Standing Committee, the Technical Committee, and working groups, on the AEWA Strategic Plan and Plan of Action for Africa for the period of 2019-2027. We welcome the new Strategic Plan as a framework setting out relevant actions aimed at maintaining migratory waterbird species and their populations or to restoring them to such a status throughout their flyways (or: achieving the goal of the Plan). The new draft Strategic Plan is very comprehensive but, having regard to limitations in progress under the current plan and continuing resource constraints, it is overambitious for the next period. While understanding that it is for Contracting Parties to define their priorities, the EU and its Member States are convinced that it is also of high importance to recognize further prioritization at the plan stage, identifying the most critical actions to be achieved in the next period. It will allow efforts and resources to focus on the most needed actions in a coordinated way along the African-Eurasian flyway.

The EU and its Member States consider that a key focus of the targets set by the Strategic Plan and the Plan of Action for Africa should be declining waterbird populations.”

97. The representative of **Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, was happy to support the new Strategic Plan in its current form. He called on all Contracting Parties to support the allocation of significant resources for effective implementation.

98. The representative of **South Africa** considered that the draft Strategic Plan 2019-2027 offered a very balanced approach to waterbird conservation, looking at issues of conservation, but also taking into account human wellbeing. She requested that Objective 2 should be strengthened in relation to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goals 1, 2 and 3. This would make the Plan more relevant to

national priorities concerned with human wellbeing. She appealed for discussion of the Strategic Plan to be closely linked with discussion of the budget.

99. The representative of **Norway** remarked that the draft Strategic Plan was very comprehensive, and that it would be challenging to ensure that all parts worked together. There was a need for further prioritization of activities and this would require further resources. He asked the Secretariat if there were plans to update the National Reporting process in the coming triennia.

100. **Mr Dereliev** responded by referring to Document AEW/MOP 7.17 *Draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEW 2018-2020*. The draft National Reporting format had been revised alongside the new draft Strategic Plan. National reporting processes had evolved over the years and a new revision of the format and content of the online system was nearly complete. The one chapter not yet finished concerned the status of native and non-native populations. The intention was to maximize efficiency by compiling this chapter so that it aligned with Article 12 reporting under the EU Birds Directive.

Agenda item 16. Adoption of the Plan of Action for Africa 2019 – 2027

101. The **Secretariat** (Ms Evelyn Moloko, African Initiative Coordinator) presented Document AEW/MOP 7.16 *Draft AEW Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2018 – a Guide to the Implementation of the AEW Strategic Plan 2019-2027 in the African Region*.

102. The representative of **Egypt** considered the draft Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) to be well structured, digestible, comprehensive and detailed. He suggested that it would benefit from simplification, and that this might be achieved by stronger prioritization of activities, perhaps through a different set of priorities in each triennium.

103. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States very much welcome the development of a new Plan of Action for Africa further to the recognition that additional efforts were needed for the implementation of the Agreement in Africa. The prioritization of actions within this plan will help enhance its effectiveness and guide Contracting Parties in any considerations of supporting these actions.”

104. **Ms Moloko** pointed out that prioritization was included in the plan, and that priorities might differ between countries and therefore needed to be assessed at national level. She hoped that each country would do this. She added that each activity appeared in the PoAA in a logical sequence, and that there was a flow and links between the objectives which might be broken if some elements were removed.

105. **South Africa** considered the position of the PoAA to be similar to that of the Strategic Plan. Both were well structured and ambitious, but there was a need to link them to budget discussions and to request those in a position to do so to contribute to the resourcing of implementation.

106. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev) presented Draft Resolution AEW/MOP 7 DR1 *Adoption and Implementation of the AEW Strategic Plan and Plan of Action for Africa for the period of 2019-2027*.

107. **Israel** noted that MOP8 would provide an opportunity to revisit the Strategic Plan and PoAA to make changes in the light of the CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A proposed amendment to operative paragraph 15 of Draft Resolution AEW/MOP7 DR1, would be made in the Working Group on Scientific and Technical Matters.

Agenda item 17. Implementation Review Process

108. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit) presented document AEWA/MOP 7.18 Rev.1 *Implementation Review Process – Report to MOP7*.

109. The **MOP** took note of the report; there were no questions or comments from the floor.

Agenda item 18. Proposals for Amendments to the Agreement and/or its Annexes

110. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance), presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.19 *Proposals to the 7th Session of the Meeting of Parties for Amendments to Annexes 2 and 3 of AEWA* and the associated draft resolution AEWA/MOP DR3 *Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes*. He noted that no comments on the proposals included in Document AEWA/MOP 7.19 had been received from Parties by the statutory deadline of 60 days prior to the opening of MOP7.

111. The **European Commission, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States** made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States support the proposed amendments to the part of Table 1 of Annex 3 related to the criteria to apply when classifying populations of waterbirds, namely removal of the word ‘*significant*’ from the criterion ‘*significant long-term decline*’ and addition of two new criteria for ‘*rapid short-term decline*’.

The EU and its Member States approve the proposed changes to the status of species as proposed in Annex I of the Draft Resolution 7.3. Among the species concerned by a population status change in Table 1 of Annex 3 of AEWA, nine species – the Common Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Common Pochard, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Northern Lapwing, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit, Red Knot, and Spotted Redshank – are huntable under the EU Birds Directive. For these nine species, the proposed changes would require an amendment to the Birds Directive. As it is not possible to amend the Birds Directive within ninety days of the date of the adoption of the amendments by the Meeting of the Parties, the Commission shall enter a reservation in relation to the proposed amendments concerning these nine species.

Despite this reservation, the EU will ask its Member States to respect the objective of not hunting the species concerned. That is in line with the new listing in AEWA.

Furthermore, for the populations of the five species – Common Eider, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Northern Lapwing, Bar-tailed Godwit, and Red Knot – listed in Categories 2*, 3*, or 4 of Column A of Table 1 of AEWA, for which Parties will endeavour to implement the principles of adaptive harvest management consistent with the requirements of Article 7 of the Birds Directive, the EU could lift its reservation with regard to them once an adaptive harvest management mechanism is in place.

It goes without saying that the EU and its Member States would welcome the addition of the Shag to Annex 2, on the basis of the proposal that we have made to the AEWA Secretariat.”

112. **Denmark** made the following statement:

“Under the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, Denmark has, in addition to its membership of the European Union, an independent role as the state responsible for the Faroe Islands.

In this role, acting on behalf of the Faroe Islands and not as an EU Member State, Denmark does not support the proposal by the European Union to amend Annex 2 by adding the European Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*). As a consequence, Denmark does not support the proposed listing of the non-EU (Barents Sea) population of the European Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis*) in Column A, category 2 in Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement.

Further, Denmark does not support the proposal by Uganda and the European Union to move all populations of Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) to Column A of Table 1 of Annex 3, and Denmark does not support the moving of all populations of Razorbill (*Alca torda*) to Column A of Table 1 of Annex 3.

Denmark believes that hunting and taking of birds and eggs of the populations of Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) and Razorbill (*Alca torda*) occurring in the Faroes should remain legal and not be subject to the regulation of Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, as Denmark supports that the Faroes should take the relevant decisions regarding bird management on the Faroes on the basis of local interests and local traditions. The Faroes are monitoring and taking initiatives to secure a sustainable management of the local bird populations.”

113. **Norway** expressed dissatisfaction with the European Commission’s proposal regarding the addition of European Shag to Annex 2 of the Agreement. This was a huntable species in Norway, where the Barents Sea population was not recognized, and its status as a migratory species was uncertain. Norwegian seabirds were closely monitored and there was no indication that this population met the necessary criteria.

114. **Iceland** supported the statements of Denmark and Norway regarding proposed changes to the Annexes related to European Shag, Atlantic Puffin and Razorbill, and also considered the population estimate for Greylag Goose to be too low. All these species were hunted in Iceland, and subject to traditional use in Icelandic legislation. Reservations would have to be made if their status was updated in the Annexes of the Agreement.

Agenda item 19. International Single Species Action and Management Plans (ISSAPs and ISSMPs)

115. The **Secretariat** (Ms Nina Mikander, Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plans) presented Document AEW/MOP 7.21 *Summary of the Current Status of Species Action and Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement* and the associated Draft Resolution AEW/MOP DR5 *Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Single Species Action and Management Plans*. She noted that MOP7 was invited to consider the adoption of two new International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs) and two new International Single Species Management Plans (ISSMPs), as well as the extension of nine ISSAPs, revision of one ISSAP, and retirement of three ISSAPs.

116. The **Chair** opened the floor for comments.

117. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“We can agree to retiring the ISSAPs for Light-bellied Brent Goose and Black-winged Pratincole and extension of the ISSAPs for another ten years (2019-2028) for Great Snipe, Ferruginous Duck, Lesser Flamingo, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-tailed Godwit, Maccoa Duck, White-winged Flufftail, and Madagascar Pond Heron.

The EU and its Member States propose to extend the validity of the ISSAP for the Corncrake, initially for the next three years until MOP8, to enable Parties to review and amend where necessary the existing plan, to consider population trends and to seek a coordinator to drive any further extension and delivery of the ISSAP.

The EU and its Member States propose to extend the validity of the ISSAP for the Lesser White-fronted Goose for the next three years until MOP8, to revise the action plan taking into account new scientific information, e.g. regarding the Swedish population, as well as experiences from implementation of the current plan. The EU and its Member States think that any new mechanism to prepare the plan needs to fully address the protection of the species under the Birds Directive and an appropriate mechanism to assure this needs to be put in place.

We have also some technical comments. We will submit all our comments in writing.”

118. **Ms Mikander** introduced Document AEWA/MOP 7.22 *Draft Revised Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-species Action Plans*.

119. The **Chair** opened the floor for comments.

120. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, recognized the work undertaken by Wetlands International and welcomed the further development of the Format and Guidelines for AEWA Action Plans as a necessary step, but proposed adding a summary of the main threats and pressures. Additional technical comments would be submitted in writing.

121. **Ms Mikander** briefly introduced three ISSAPs tabled for review and adoption through Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR5. These were contained in:

- Document AEWA/MOP 7.23 *Draft ISSAP for the Conservation of the Velvet Scoter (Melanitta fusca) – Western Siberia and Northern Europe/NW Europe Population*
- Document AEWA/MOP 7.24 *Draft Revised CMS/AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the White-headed Duck (Oxyura leucocephala)*
- Document AEWA/MOP 7.25 *Draft CMS/AEWA/EU/EAAFP International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Dalmatian Pelican (Pelecanus crispus)*

122. The **Chair** opened the floor for comments.

123. **Norway** accepted the proposals but drew attention to an apparent technical error in the draft ISSAP for Velvet Scoter.

124. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, recognized the work done by the compilers and welcomed the adoption of these three ISSAPs.

125. The **Secretariat** (Ms Eva Meyers, Coordinator – European Goose Management Platform) presented two ISSMPs tabled for review and adoption through Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR5. These were contained in:

- Document AEW/MOP 7.26 *Draft AEW International Single Species Management Plan for the Barnacle Goose (Branta leucopsis)*
- Document AEW/MOP 7.27 *Draft AEW International Single Species Management Plan for the Greylag Goose (Anser anser) – Northwest/Southwest European Population*

126. The **Chair** opened the floor for comments.

127. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“ The EU and its Member States recognize the progress in the efforts to coordinate the management of the Greylag Goose population at the flyway level, when relevant, and the measures aimed at preventing damage or managing risks in the context of the European Goose Management Platform. The EU and its Member States agree to support the adoption of the ISSMP for the Greylag Goose - NW/SW European population. However, not all Member States agree to the added value and, therefore, the ISSMP will only be implemented by the Member States that find it useful. The EU would like to request the Secretariat to reflect that situation in the minutes of the MOP.

For the Barnacle Goose, the EU and its Member States appreciate that there have been major improvements in the draft ISSMP. We would like to stress the need for some adaption of the text with a view to the adoption of the Plan.”

128. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, tabled a number of proposed amendments to the draft ISSMP for Barnacle Goose and confirmed that these had been submitted in writing to the Secretariat.

129. **Norway** recalled that the draft ISSMPs had undergone several rounds of consultation. It was therefore a little surprising that the EU was proposing changes at this late stage. It would be important to be able to see the EU’s proposals in writing in order to fully assess their implications. Norway also wished to raise the matter of aviation safety and the potential increased risk of bird strikes at small airports in coastal areas where migratory geese occurred.

130. **Ms Meyers** confirmed that the Secretariat had received the proposals from the EU in writing and had incorporated those concerning the ISSMP for Barnacle Goose into an in-session document, AEW/MOP 7.26 WGP1, which had been uploaded to the MOP7 website.

131. The **Chair** referred further discussion, including deliberations on the relevant Draft Resolution, to the Working Group on Scientific and Technical matters.

Agenda item 20. Seabirds

132. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance) introduced Document AEW/MOP 7.28 *Plastics and Waterbirds: Incidence and Impacts* and the associated Draft Resolution AEW/MOP DR6 *Priorities for the Conservation of Seabirds in the African-Eurasian Flyways*.

133. The **Chair** opened the floor for comments.

134. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States recognize the work done by the RSPB and the BirdLife International Global Seabirds Programme on the assessment of the potential impacts of plastic to migratory seabirds. We welcome the document AEWA MOP 7.28 as an important step to enhance the planning of responses to waterbird declines, and take its conclusions and recommendations into account in the decision-making process.

The EU and its Member States suggest softening the operative section of the Draft Resolution in a few areas, in order to allow scope for discretion as regard the use of guidance. We propose further refinement and prioritization of actions by the Technical Committee of the list of preliminary priorities, which is recognized already in the Draft Resolution.

The EU and its Member States would like to emphasize that the impact of by-catch can also be addressed by preventive measures. That aspect could be better reflected in the Draft Resolution.

The EU its Member States suggest some minor changes in wording in paragraph 1.3 to avoid ambiguity, and in paragraph 1.4 to adjust the wording of INNS impacts. We also propose to add in the Draft Resolution, preambular text referring to UNEA resolution 3/7 on Marine Litter and Microplastics (2017).

In Document AEWA/MOP 7.30, page 3, paragraph 13 c, d and e, the EU policies should refer to the European Union and not to the European Commission. We will send the exact proposals in writing.”

135. **UNEP** recalled that UNEA-3 placed high priority on pollution. UNEP was currently preparing an Implementation Report on the issue, to which the CMS Secretariat had already contributed, and this would be submitted to UNEA-4 in March 2019. The AEWA document on plastics could form a valuable input to the UNEP Implementation Report.

136. **Wetlands International** noted that Document AEWA/MOP 7.28 concluded that plastic probably had relatively little impact at population level for AEWA populations. This was potentially at odds with the announcement under agenda item 13 that plastic would be the theme of World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) in 2019.

137. **Mr Dereliev** concurred that careful messaging would be needed, but underlined that WMBD was a global initiative covering all bird species everywhere. The report that had been presented had a relatively narrow scope in terms of both taxa and geography.

138. The **Secretariat** (Ms Nina Mikander) introduced document AEWA/MOP 7.29 Rev.1 *Advice on AEWA Priorities for Seabird Conservation*.

139. The **Chair** opened the floor to comments of principle. There being no such interventions, he referred further discussion to the Working Group on Scientific and Technical matters.

Agenda item 21. Waterbird Monitoring

140. **Wetlands International**, represented by Mr Szabolcs Nagy, presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.35 *Draft Revised AEWA Conservation Guidelines on Waterbird Monitoring (AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 9)*.

141. **Gambia** welcomed the document, and asked about how the environmental conditions of habitats were monitored.

142. **Mr Nagy** replied that standard methods for monitoring of site conditions were still being developed. There were a number of methods used, and the Guidelines provided links to many of these. Countries selected appropriate methods. Harmonization, and adoption of modern methods such as remote sensing, would be useful.

143. The **UK** added that the monitoring of site conditions was covered in Document AEWA/MOP 7.34 which had been presented earlier and which contained links to Ramsar Convention guidance on this topic.

144. The **French Hunting Federation** asked how data from citizen science was included in the assessment of population trends.

145. **Mr Nagy** described the International Waterbird Census as the largest citizen science programme in the world. The Guidelines recognized that outside Europe, observers such as protected area staff and hunting agencies were often in a better position to conduct monitoring.

Agenda item 22. Guidance on Implementation of the Agreement

146. **Ms Melissa Lewis, on behalf of the AEWA Technical Committee**, presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.32 *Draft Guidance on Satisfying the Conditions of Paragraph 2.1.3 of the AEWA Action Plan*.

147. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States recognize the work done by the Technical Committee on the guidance on satisfying the conditions of paragraph 2.1.3 on the AEWA Action Plan. We welcome the adoption of these guidelines as a necessary step towards a clear and understandable framework for the use of paragraph 2.1.3.”

148. **Ms Lewis** presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.33 *Draft Guidance on AEWA’s Provisions on Non-native Species*.

149. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States recognize the work done by the Technical Committee on the guidance on non-native species. The EU and its Member States note that while working on the implementation of the ‘Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species’ the methodology for risk assessments of invasive alien species has been adopted. We propose that the Technical Committee should take into account appropriate methodologies for risk assessments, including those used by the EU.”

150. **Mr David Stroud, on behalf of the AEWA Technical Committee**, presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.34 *Draft Guidance on Taking a Systematic Approach to Responding to Waterbird Declines: A Checklist of Potential Actions*.

151. **Estonia, on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, made the following statement:

“The EU and its Member States also recognize the work done by the Technical Committee on developing a guidance on taking a systematic approach to responding to waterbird declines: a checklist of potential actions. We welcome the adoption of these guidelines as an important step to enhance the planning responses to waterbird declines.

We propose to add references to five different guidance documents available in English; we will submit these concrete changes in writing.”

152. The **Chair** requested that the meeting should review the draft guidance and the associated Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR8 *Adoption of Guidance in the context of implementation of the AEWA Action Plan*.

Agenda item 23. Climate-resilient flyways

153. **Wetlands International**, represented by Mr Merijn van Leeuwen, presented a summary of the outcomes of the project on Climate Resilient Flyways sponsored by the German International Climate Initiative (IKI) and launched at MOP6.

Agenda item 24. Institutional Arrangements

a. Standing Committee

154. The **Executive Secretary** (Dr Jacques Trouvilliez), presented Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR10 *Institutional Arrangements: Standing Committee*. The MOP was requested to identify regional representatives and alternates to serve on the Standing Committee during the next triennium and to review and adopt the Draft Resolution.

b. Technical Committee

155. The **Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance) presented Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR11 Rev.1 *Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee*.

156. The **Chair** ruled that in the interests of time he would not open the floor for comments; Parties were aware what needed to be discussed and agreed within regional groupings.

Agenda item 25. Financial and Administrative Matters

a. Report on Finance and Administrative Issues in 2016-2018

157. The **Executive Secretary** presented Document AEWA/MOP 7.36 Rev.1 *Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative Issues in 2016-2018*. The MOP was invited to take note of the report.

158. The **Chair** opened the floor to comments of principle.

159. There being no requests for the floor, the **MOP** noted Document AEWA/MOP 7.36 Rev.1.

b. Draft Scale of Contributions for the Triennium 2019-2021

160. The **Executive Secretary** presented Document AEW/MOP 7.37 Rev.1 *Draft Scale of Contributions for 2019-2021*. The MOP was requested to consider the method proposed in Document AEW/MOP 7.37 Rev.1 and to decide, through Draft Resolution AEW/MOP7 DR12 *Financial and Administrative Matters* on its application for the development of the AEW scale of contributions 2019-2021. The details would be discussed during the Working Group on Financial and Administrative matters.

c. Draft Budget proposal for 2019-2021

161. The **Executive Secretary** presented Document AEW/MOP 7.38 *Draft Budget Proposal for 2019-2021*, which set out four budget scenarios as determined by the Standing Committee:

- Scenario 1: zero nominal growth = 0 % increase
- Scenario 2: zero real growth = Scenario 1 + 4.04 % increase to take account of inflation
- Scenario 3: = Scenario 2 + 4.79 % increase in part-time G-staff and operational costs
- Scenario 4: = Scenario 3 + 23 % increase in part-time staff and operational costs

162. He briefly outlined the implications of each of these scenarios as detailed in Document AEW/MOP 7.38, noting that the budget would be discussed in detail during the Working Group on Financial and Administrative matters and adopted through Draft Resolution AEW/MOP7 DR12 *Financial and Administrative Matters*.

163. The **Executive Secretary** stressed that there had been no budget increase for AEW since MOP4; there had even been a drop in real terms due to inflation. He also recalled that, during the last decade, a total of € 820,000 had been withdrawn from the Trust Fund. If these trends were to continue, the future viability of the Secretariat would be in question.

164. The **Chair** invited the Working Group on Financial and Administrative matters to take forward discussion of the budget. He suspended the plenary session until 09.00 on the morning of Saturday, 8 December and asked the two Working Groups to convene at 16.30.

Agenda item 26. Reports of Sessional Committees

165. In the absence of the Chair of MOP7, the **Vice-Chair**, Mr Barirega Akankwasah of Uganda took the Chair. He invited the **Chair of the Credentials Committee**, Algeria, to present the Committee's final report.

166. **Algeria** reported that the Credentials Committee, composed of Ghana, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Algeria, had met on 4 and 5 December. Of 58 Contracting Parties registered for MOP7, 55 were represented at the meeting. The Committee had examined credentials submitted by 43 Parties and approved the credentials of 39 Parties, whilst the credentials of four Parties were rejected.

167. The **Chair** thanked the Credentials Committee for its work.

168. **Mr David Stroud (UK), Chair of the Working Group on Scientific and Technical Matters**, reported that the Working Group had engaged in constructive discussion of ten Draft Resolutions and a range of supporting documents. Consensus had been reached on all issues. Thanks were due to all participants and to the Secretariat for its support.

169. The **Chair** thanked the Working Group on Scientific and Technical Matters for its thorough and very efficient work.

170. **Mr Øystein Størkersen (Norway), Chair of the Working Group on Financial and Administrative Matters**, thanked all participants and the Secretariat for their valuable contributions and efforts. The Working Group had agreed to a budget with zero real growth, which was essentially Scenario 2 of the four scenarios that had been presented to plenary by the Executive Secretary on Day 2 of the MOP (see paragraph 166 above).

171. The Working Group had agreed to apply the 2015 UN scale of assessment as a basis to calculate the national contributions. A cap on increased contributions of more than 100 per cent meant that no Party should pay more than double its current contribution. However, it had been agreed that two countries, Algeria and Nigeria, would be granted a 50 per cent cap. A modest sum of € 6,000 would be drawn from the Trust Fund to cover this shortfall as referenced in operative paragraph 7 and Appendix 3 of the Draft Resolution contained in AEWA/MOP7 DR12 Rev.2. Mr Størkersen drew attention to the fact that the reserve in the Trust Fund had been maintained at a low level during the preceding ten years.

172. Paragraph 14 of the Draft Resolution concerned evaluating the possibility of suspending the voting rights of Parties more than three years in arrears with their contributions.

173. Mr Størkersen made an appeal for voluntary contributions, which would be especially important for the implementation of the Plan of Action for Africa.

174. He ended by acknowledging that most of the Secretariat staff were over-performing in relation to their position titles and salary grades, and that the recommendation from UNEP regarding the upgrading of many staff members should be kept in mind for consideration at MOP8.

175. **The Executive Secretary** referred to the € 6,000 to be withdrawn from the Trust Fund to compensate for the shortfall resulting from the special arrangement for Algeria and Nigeria. He stressed that this was an exception that would not be repeated in future.

176. **The Chair** thanked the Chairs of the two Working Groups for their thoroughness, and for guiding the compromises that had been achieved in the Working Group meetings.

Agenda item 27. Adoption of the Resolutions and Amendments to the Annexes of the Agreement

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR1 Rev. 1 *Adoption and Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan and the Plan of Action for Africa for the Period 2019-2027*

177. **South Africa** presented the following statement:

“Recalling the crucial importance of international collaboration across flyways to ensure the effective conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats, which is provided in the framework of AEWA;

Aware that the theme of the 7th Session of the AEWA Meeting of the Parties is “*Beyond 2020: Shaping flyway conservation for the future*”;

Appreciating the efforts by all AEWA Contracting Parties and partners towards advancing the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018 and AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2018;

Aware of the disturbing outcomes of the assessment of the level of implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018; and

Acknowledging the need to further strengthen the implementation of the new AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 as the operational guidelines to shape the implementation of the Agreement over the next decade;

The Government of the Republic of South Africa:

Engages to play a lead role in stimulating and advancing the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027 (PoAA) adopted by the AEWA MOP7 as a comprehensive guide towards the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 in the African region, through exemplary action on implementing the AEWA PoAA at the national level as well as through promoting strengthened collaboration at regional and flyway levels, and in particular by championing the implementation of the AEWA International Multi-species Action Plan for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds, and International Single Species Action Plans for the Conservation of the White-winged Flufftail and the Grey Crowned-crane across the applicable flyways, while ensuring to sustain a coherent and comprehensive network of suitable, protected and well managed sites of crucial importance for the survival of these populations of migratory waterbirds across their entire flyways.”

178. **The Chair** thanked South Africa for committing to engage as a champion of the PoAA and proposed incorporating the operative part of the statement into the Draft Resolution.

179. Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR1 Rev.1 was adopted subject to the inclusion of the statement by **South Africa**.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR2 Rev.2 *AEWA’s Contribution to Delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets and the Relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals*

180. This Draft Resolution was adopted without further amendment.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR3 Rev.1 *Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes*

181. This Draft Resolution was adopted without further amendment.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR4 *Adoption and Amendments of Definitions and Interpretation of Terms used in the Context of Table 1 of the AEWA Annex 3*

182. This Draft Resolution was adopted without further amendment.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR5 Rev.1 *Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans*

183. **Israel** noted that Paragraph 6 of the Draft Resolution contained a list of Action Plans to be retired, whilst paragraph 7 listed those to be extended. One species, Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*, did not appear on either list, despite discussion during the Working Group that had resulted in recommending extension of the Action Plan. Israel suggested that this point could be incorporated into Paragraph 9, alongside the Action Plan for Corncrake *Crex crex*, so that the Action Plan for Black-winged Pratincole would also be reviewed during the coming triennium.

184. **The Secretariat** (Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit) thanked Israel for noticing this omission, and suggested that, in the interests of clarity, it would be preferable to treat the extension of the Action Plan for Black-winged Pratincole as a separate paragraph.

185. **Israel** agreed to this solution and placed its trust in the Secretariat to formulate appropriate text for the new paragraph.

186. This Draft Resolution was adopted with the amendment suggested by **Israel**, as modified by the suggestion of the Secretariat.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR6 Rev.1 *Priorities for the Conservation of Seabirds in the African-Eurasian Flyways*

187. **Israel** suggested a minor textual amendment to Paragraph 1.4 of the Draft Resolution.

188. This Draft Resolution was adopted with the inclusion of the amendment proposed by **Israel**.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR7 Rev.1 *Strengthening Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds*

189. This Draft Resolution was adopted subject to the inclusion of language improvements to the French text, to be forwarded to the Secretariat by **France**.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR8 Rev.1 *Revision and Adoption of Conservation Guidance*

190. This Draft Resolution was adopted without further amendment.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR9 Rev.2 *Climate Resilient Flyways*

191. This Draft Resolution was adopted subject to the inclusion of a typographical error in the sixth preambular paragraph, as pointed out by **Slovakia**.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR10 Rev.1 *Institutional Arrangements: Standing Committee*

192. The **Chair** noted that the second Alternate member of the Standing Committee for Europe and Central Asia should read Moldova rather than Croatia.

193. The Draft Resolution was adopted subject to the inclusion of the amendment tabled by the Chair.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR11 Rev.2 *Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee*

194. In response to a question from Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, the **Secretariat** noted that DR12 Rev.2 Financial and Administrative Matters contained a request to the Standing Committee to assess, in conjunction with the Technical Committee and Secretariat, the implications of moving from a three-year to a four-year MOP cycle. The text of DR12 Rev.2 had not been available at the time DR11 Rev.2 was finalized, but the Secretariat would ensure that the Technical Committee's role in the assessment was reflected in the TC's Work Plan for 2019-2021, as annexed to DR11 Rev.2.

195. **Estonia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, confirmed that this would be a satisfactory way forward.

196. **Belgium** expressed concern about the large number of vacant positions, especially for Alternates, shown in the proposed composition of the TC for 2019-2021.

197. The **Secretariat** explained that Alternates only had an active role when Regional Representatives were unable to participate. In the two cases where no Regional Representative had been nominated, in the accordance with the TC Modus Operandi the Chair of the TC was authorized to identify and appoint suitable experts, in consultation with the regions concerned and with the support of the Secretariat.

198. The **Chair of the Technical Committee**, Dr Saulius Svazas observed that the AEWA budget for the coming triennium (as contained in Draft Resolution DR12 Rev.2) would again be inadequate to cover the operation of TC, whose members would again be obliged to work essentially on a voluntary basis. The Chair invited Parties in a position to do so to consider supporting the work of TC through Additional Voluntary Contributions to the AEWA budget.

199. Draft Resolution DR11 Rev.2 was adopted subject to inclusion of the adjustment to the Technical Committee's Work Plan for consistency with DR12 Rev.2 (as outlined by the Secretariat) and noting the point raised by Belgium.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR12 Rev.2 *Financial and Administrative Matters*

200. This Resolution was adopted subject to the inclusion of two minor amendments: the first tabled by **Israel**, to add “(IN EURO)” to the title of Appendix III; the second, tabled by the **Czech Republic**, to insert the word “Voluntary” in operative paragraph 16 to read “...AEWA Voluntary Trust Fund (AVL)...”.

Draft Recommendation AEWA/MOP7 DRec.7.1 Implementation Review Process

201. The Draft Recommendation was adopted without amendment.

Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR14 Tribute to the Organizers

202. **Ghana, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, warmly thanked South Africa for the commitment and resources reflected in the venue, facilities and services accorded to MOP7 delegates. The Africa region wished to thank all those who had contributed to the success of the Meeting, and especially the Governments of Finland, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland for facilitating the participation of delegates from Parties in Africa.

203. This Draft Resolution was adopted, unamended, by acclamation.

Agenda item 28. Date and Venue of the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

204. The **Chair** tabled Draft Resolution AEWA/MOP7 DR13 *Date, Venue and Funding of the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA*, noting that the text could only be finalized once a Host Country had been identified. He opened the floor to any Party that wished to make an offer to host MOP8.

205. **The representative of Hungary** read out a letter from Dr Zsolt Semjén, Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary, as sent to the Executive Secretary in October 2018, which contained an invitation to MOP8 to meet in Budapest in September 2021 and a commitment by Hungary to provide financial support for the organization of the MOP.

206. The invitation of Hungary was warmly accepted by the Meeting, which adopted Resolution **AEWA/MOP7 DR13**, confirming Hungary as the Host Country of MOP8, by acclamation.

Agenda item 29. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting

207. The Draft Report of the plenary sessions of Days 1 and 2 of the Meeting was adopted without amendment.

208. The Meeting noted that, in line with the Rules of Procedure and AEWA’s standard practice, the Draft Report of the final plenary session would be reviewed and approved by the Chair, prior to it being circulated to Parties.

Agenda item 30. Any Other Business

209. The representative of **South Africa** recalled that 15 December 2018 had been identified in the processes of the Convention on Biological Diversity as the deadline for receipt of proposals relating to the post-2020 Global Framework for Biodiversity. It would be important for AEWA to act quickly to transmit relevant outcomes of MOP7.

Agenda item 31. Closure of the Meeting

210. **The European Commission, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States** made the following statement:

“We wish to express our sincere thanks to the Government and people of South Africa for their excellent hosting of this meeting and also for providing us with the opportunity to experience at first hand the magnificent nature and culture of your country. We would like to express our warm gratitude to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Meeting as well as of the Working Groups and to the AEWA Secretariat for all the work they have undertaken in helping make this MOP a success.

This has been an important and timely meeting. While the EU and its Member States remain committed to progress towards achieving the 2020 biodiversity targets, the central theme of this conference on ‘Beyond 2020 – shaping flyway conservation for the future’ has provided all Contracting Parties to AEWA with a real opportunity to shape our future common agenda.

The adoption of the new Strategic Plan for 2019 to 2027 and the Plan of Action for Africa are therefore major milestones in providing a framework for cooperation and future action. These Plans capture the key challenges for successful conservation and sustainable use, ranging from strengthening knowledge and the science base to ensuring a strong legal underpinning and sound governance mechanisms.

The success in their delivery is dependent on the commitment of many people as well as on assuring the necessary resources to promote compliance with implementation of the Agreement. This requires important financial resources. We have had discussions on the budget at this MOP, which underline the need to have clear priorities for action so that we focus limited resources on the most pressing and important conservation priorities. Together with the AEWA Secretariat, the EU and its Member States will need to examine ways to support delivering key elements of the Plan, including through possible voluntary contributions. In this regard a key EU priority is supporting the development of capacity building, training and action in Africa.

Ultimately the success of conservation is determined by practical action. The work of AEWA on species action plans is a core delivery mechanism. Important progress has been made at this MOP in relation to adopting plans, including for several successful waterbird species that come into conflict with human interests. Such management work is important but we also particularly welcome the recognition at this MOP that the main focus on species action planning has to be on species in decline. The European Union and its Member States are committed to continue strengthening our partnership with AEWA in developing and implementing species action plans, including, where relevant, involving adaptive harvest management approaches for huntable species to ensure that any use of waterbirds is sustainable.

The conservation and wise use of wetlands is central to delivery of the flyway objective of AEWA. The earlier work developed under the ‘Wings over Wetlands’ project and other initiatives to identify important wetlands for migratory waterbirds remain highly relevant. The EU and its Member States have established a network of Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive, although much work is still needed for its effective management. We look forward to action to strengthen the networks of protected wetland areas along the flyways of species and that this is done in ways that also benefit local communities who live in and depend upon these areas.

There is a great deal of work ahead of us all to achieve the objectives of AEWA and advancing the conservation of our shared heritage of waterbirds. The EU and its Member States look forward to meeting this challenge. Finally, as Hungary has offered to host the next Meeting of the Parties, the EU and its Member States very much look forward to welcoming you all to Budapest in 2021.”

211. The **Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands** thanked South Africa for hosting MOP7 and the AEWA Secretariat for engaging in several joint actions with Ramsar, thereby increasing synergies between the two treaties.

212. The representative of **South Africa** (Mr Barney Kgope, Department of Environmental Affairs) made closing remarks on behalf of the National, Provincial and Municipal authorities. It had indeed been a great pleasure to host the AEWA Family and it was difficult to bid farewell. The Hosts were pleased that the meeting had set a clear and robust Strategic Plan and PoAA in response to the ‘Beyond 2020’ theme of MOP7. He reiterated some of the highlights of South Africa’s commitment to the establishment and management of

protected areas for biodiversity conservation, which had been presented the previous evening during the gala dinner. South Africa understood the responsibility that came with holding the AEWA Presidency of the MOP and undertook to make a difference during the next triennium ahead of MOP8, noting that implementation of MOP7 decisions would require champions, partnerships and resources. Behind every successful meeting there was a formidable team; he wished to thank all those who had contributed, not least the delegates themselves: “*You have been amazing!*”. The Host Country team hoped that it had been able to meet delegates’ expectations; without mentioning names of individuals, he wished to thank colleagues from the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa, the Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs of KwaZulu-Natal, and eTheKwini Municipality. Finally, he wished all participants ‘bon voyage’.

213. **The AEWA Executive Secretary**, Dr Jacques Trouvilliez, made the following statement:

“I would like to start by expressing my deepest thanks to our hosts:

- The Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa;
- The Province of KwaZulu-Natal;
- The eTheKwini Municipality;

Thank you for the warm welcome here in Durban and your gracious hospitality. You have made us all feel at home during the past week.

During these days together, we have worked hard to deliver on our MOP7 slogan: “Beyond 2020: Shaping flyway conservation for the future”. I am very happy to witness the progress that we have made – but at the same time I know that we are all very conscious of the many challenges that still lie ahead of us.

I wish to congratulate the Parties on the adoption of the new AEWA Strategic Plan for 2019-2027 and the Plan of Action for Africa, which both outline our path for the next decade in waterbird conservation. Although ambitious indeed, these two Plans outline what needs to be done if we are really serious about the fate of the species we have vowed to protect under the Agreement. I am confident that, collectively, with strong partnerships and sufficient resources and by going beyond our conservation bubble, we will be able to deliver on this ambitious roadmap. In fact, we must!

In addition, this Meeting of the Parties has adopted very concrete decisions on the conservation and sustainable use of our waterbirds: new Species Action and Management Plans; conservation priorities for Seabirds; and Guidance on waterbird monitoring – just to name a few.

I am also relieved, that after challenging negotiations on the budget for the next triennium, we have reached an agreement that will allow the Secretariat to continue servicing the Parties for three more years. In this regard, I am very grateful for the additional generous voluntary support provided to the Agreement from several of our Parties and partners – all contributions (both small and large) are welcome and much appreciated. Such additional support is really crucial for the implementation of our Agreement.”

214. **The Executive Secretary** warmly thanked the staff of the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the MOP and the Chairs of the two Working Groups and presented tokens of appreciation to those present. He also expressed his sincere thanks to the interpreters, report writers, local staff, the technical and logistical support team, to the entire team of the Olive Convention Centre, and last, but not least to the AEWA Secretariat and colleagues from the CMS Secretariat that had made MOP7 possible. He closed by acknowledging the constructive inputs and positive spirit of all participants, wishing everyone a safe return home.

215. **The Chair** added his own thanks, on behalf of AEWA Parties, to all those that had contributed to the success of the MOP. He encouraged all participants to reflect on a quotation that he had come across during the MOP7 ‘Heritage Trail’ excursion: “*What we think, or what we know, or what we believe is – in the end – of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.*” With that he declared MOP7 officially closed.

