

Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee

9 – 11 May 2005, Flic en Flac, Mauritius

1. Opening

1. Mr Yousoof Mungroo, Technical Committee Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to Mauritius.

2. Welcome addresses

2. Mr Bert Lenten, AEWA Executive Secretary, thanked Mr Mungroo for the invitation to hold this meeting in the only small island state currently Party to the Agreement. He welcomed the participants to this meeting in AEWA's tenth year, and outlined some of the activities planned to mark the anniversary. He also stressed that as the third Meeting of the Parties would be held in October 2005, the agenda included many items requiring submission to the Standing Committee for decision prior to the MOP.

3. In her address, the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Technology and Natural Resources, Mrs K. Beegun, welcomed participants on behalf of the Government of Mauritius, which was honoured to host a meeting of a United Nations agreement. Her country was committed to conserving its natural heritage and proud to have ratified almost all the UN biodiversity-related conventions, including AEWA.

3. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

4. Bert Lenten introduced document AEWA/TC 6.2. The Rules of Procedure (RoP) for the TC had been amended at the last TC meeting and forwarded to the Standing Committee, which had again made some small amendments, namely to Rule 1 and Rule 8. The TC was now asked to approve the wording proposed in this document.

5. The meeting again considered the RoP and discussed additional modifications.

6. Charles Mlingwa proposed deleting the word "and" in Rule 4a after "West Africa". He also proposed in the second line of Rule 10 adding the word "members" after "committees".

7. In Rule 7, line 4, Emmanuel Severre proposed changing "stand down" to "step down".

8. Following a request by Olivier Biber for clarification as to the meaning of "corresponding Meeting of the Parties" in Rule 9, it was decided to replace this with "same Meeting of the Parties".

9. Regarding the same rule, Valentin Serebryakov asked when TC members were to be elected. Bert Lenten agreed that the rule was not clear on this point. Nominations would be made by the regions before the MOP, but the final election would take place during the MOP.

10. Another query raised concerned the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair. Bert Lenten explained that after each MOP the members of the TC were free to choose their own Chair and Vice-Chair.

11. The meeting discussed Ward Hagemeyer's proposition to delete Rule 17 because it was a duplication of Rule 3, and concluded that these rules were slightly different in wording, but not in meaning. It was decided to delete Rule 3 and leave Rule 17.

12. Emmanuel Severre proposed modifying Rule 21 by adding the words "and voting" after "members present".

13. Regarding Rule 24, Yousoof Mungroo pointed out that "insofar" should read "in so far" and that there was an error in line 1 of Rule 26, which should read "Any member of the Technical Committee".

14. The Meeting agreed to all these proposals and adopted the Rules of Procedure.

4. Adoption of the agenda and work programme

15. Documents AEWA/TC 6.3 Revision 1 (Agenda) and AEWA/TC 6.4 Revision 1 (Work Programme) were adopted.

5. Admission of Observers

16. The meeting welcomed and agreed to admit as observers Mr Emmanuel Severre (Chairman, AEWA Standing Committee), Dr Petri Nummi (Finland), Mr Mzamulu Kaita (Tanzania), Dr David Stroud (UK), Ms Jasmin Kanza (UNEP/CMS), Mr Robert Pople (UNEP/WCMC), Mr John O'Sullivan (BirdLife International), Mr John Swift (FACE), Mr Guy-Noël Olivier (O.M.P.O.).

6. Adoption of the minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Technical Committee

17. The minutes were tabled as document AEWA/TC 6.5.

18. Ward Hagemeyer asked if the Secretariat could report on progress related to paragraph 23. Bert Lenten replied that the UN still considered Iraq too unsafe for activities to be undertaken there.

19. Ward Hagemeyer also enquired about progress on the internet discussion forum (para. 31), and Bert Lenten reported that WCMC were working on a special portal, which he hoped would soon be ready.

20. Responding to Ward Hagemeyer's enquiry regarding progress in the Russian Federation (paras. 34 and 35), Bert Lenten reported that discussion was starting with CMS to consider options, and that a proposal would be made to the next TC meeting.

21. On the same subject, Sergey Dereliev reported that at the beginning of October he would be attending a symposium on waterbirds in St Petersburg (Russian Federation). This would be an opportunity to meet many of the decision-makers, to discuss any problems with them and promote the idea of the Russian Federation ratifying AEWA. A special side event (round table discussion) was foreseen on the AEWA. A member of the TC was welcome to join him, and he would inform the Committee as soon as more information and the agenda were available.

22. Ward Hagemeyer enquired about progress in liaising with MEAs (para. 51). Bert Lenten reported that discussion with CMS had started recently, as this kind of work was not funded by CMS or Ramsar, and that Sergey Dereliev would follow this up in the coming weeks. CMS had recently contracted Mrs Paola Deda, a former CBD staff member, to liaise with other conventions, and this was expected to improve contacts with CBD.

23. In addition to these points, some editorial modifications were requested, discussed and agreed upon. The minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Technical Committee were approved with these changes.

7. Report by the Chairman

24. Mr Mungroo reported that since establishment of the Standing Committee, correspondence between himself and the Secretariat had been less frequent but had continued. He had attended the Global Flyway Conference in Edinburgh in March 2004, immediately prior to the fifth TC meeting. During the plenary session the first AEWA DVD had been launched. Naturally much of his time had been devoted to the preparation of this sixth TC meeting. The Chairman had also attended the second meeting of the Standing Committee in Bonn in November 2004.

8. Report by the Secretariat

25. Bert Lenten presented document AEWA/TC 6.6, an update of the report presented to TC5. One new issue was the move of the Secretariat from their previous offices at the United Nations Premises (Haus Carstanjen) to an annex some distance away. This was, however, only a temporary measure, as the Secretariat would in October 2005 be moving, along with almost all the UN organisations in Bonn, to new premises. Here AEWA would occupy an entire floor, with space for future expansion. The Executive Secretary was very happy about the support being provided by the German government in this respect.

26. Regarding the situation within the Agreements Unit, Nairobi had been asked to provide more financial and administrative support, and CMS now had three additional staff members in its administration unit.

27. The AEWA Secretariat also had new staff members: Sergey Dereliev, previously with Ramsar and the Bulgarian partner of BirdLife International, who would be responsible for the Technical Committee and would also ensure more capacity to deal with technical issues. Recruitment was under way for a Junior Professional Officer, funded by the German government, to start in October 2005 on a one-year contract. His or her tasks would include information management and hopefully work on the website, but also dealing with the African-Eurasian Flyways GEF project. Catherine Lehmann had been contracted to prepare the forthcoming MOP, Florian Keil had been working part-time on the website, and was now developing an electronic newsletter. Ayhan Polat was assisting with administration.

28. Bert Lenten also reported on the events taking place in 2005 to mark AEWA's 10th anniversary.

29. A successful workshop on sustainable hunting had been held in 2004 in Senegal, attended by 10 countries. The proceedings would be available in about two months

30. The government of Luxemburg had offered financial support, which was very much appreciated. This had been used to produce posters in various languages, stickers, pins, and an accession guide in English, French, Arabic and Russian.

9. Current status regarding implementation of the International Implementation Priorities 2003-2007

31. Bert Lenten introduced document AEWA/TC 6.7, another report submitted on an annual basis. He apologised for an error in the second paragraph of the introduction; he now had the latest figures: instead of a shortfall of 50,000 USD there was in fact a surplus of 27,000 USD. Although financial support from countries was decreasing, he was pleased that a number of projects outlined in document 6.7. could be implemented. He then went through the document item by item. Where no information was given, this indicated that no funding was available.

32. David Stroud reported that a first draft of the Atlas of Wader Populations (project no. 17) was ready and would soon be on the internet for consultation. It was hoped to complete this by December 2005.

33. Regarding the waterbird field guide for Uzbekistan (project no. 30), Elena Kreuzberg thanked AEWA for its support. The guide was now finished and would be published very shortly.

34. David Stroud congratulated the Secretariat for raising voluntary contributions to implement an impressive array of projects, especially considering the current financial problems.

35. Ward Hagemeyer felt that, in addition to this report, an overview of the general status of implementation of the agreement, especially at a national level, was lacking.

36. Bert Lenten agreed that there was a lack of information, with, for example, only nine national reports submitted at the last MOP. Despite pressure, information was hard to obtain. Only when it was available could one begin to analyse it to decide how implementation was progressing.

37. Elena Kreuzberg pointed out that in Uzbekistan, for example, there were no mechanisms for cooperation and communication between executing authorities and implementing agencies, and it was necessary to consider how these could be established at a national level. Anything done was on the initiative of scientists, and not because the ministry wanted to improve its implementation of AEWA.

38. She also reported that her working group was in the process of preparing a national action plan for the White-headed Duck in Uzbekistan, supported by the IUCN Netherlands National Committee, and that a group of scientists involved with this project had recently recorded a flock of 50 Slender-billed Curlews in a wetland in Uzbekistan. She felt that promoting such national activities would in the long run improve the implementation of AEWA and other international conventions.

39. Preben Clausen felt that EU funding could be sought for projects related to climatic change, which was currently a "hot issue".

40. John Swift expressed concern at the apparent lack of priority given to projects 27 and 28, particularly regarding climate change. He felt that information about the influence of such changes was vital to further work.

41. Clarifying, Bert Lenten explained that the 41 projects listed should be regarded as a "shopping list". Countries were free to choose which projects to support, and AEWA had limited influence on their decision.

42. On the issue of climate change, Sergey Dereliev reported that UNEP, through CMS, had offered to provide up to 50% of the funding, but not exceeding 25,000 USD, for a project on climate change and migratory species. During the meeting of the Seabird Working Group of the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) in February 2005, a brainstorming session had been held to find ideas for projects. A detailed proposal was currently being developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska for submission to UNEP. This would also be sent to TC members for their endorsement because AEWA was being asked to contribute up to 25% of the funding. The study would initially investigate how climate change might affect game species of sea ducks and seabirds in the Arctic and the communities that depended on this harvest, but might later be extended to other taxa.

10. Proposal for International Implementation Priorities 2006-2010

43. Sergey Dereliev introduced document AEWA/TC 6.8 to be discussed together with Draft Resolution 3.X. A draft of the document had been circulated and some comments and additional proposals incorporated. As usual, projects not implemented would remain on the list in the hope of finding funding in the next triennium.

44. In a general discussion of this document, the point was made that a strategic plan to give guidance on priorities for the IIPs was lacking. It was therefore agreed to recommend to MOP3, through the Standing Committee, that a Strategic Plan be developed for the Agreement. At the same time it was felt that flexibility for donors to select favoured projects should be maintained, because this approach had proved to work well so far.

45. In a general comment, Ward Hagemeijer found the wording of item 9 in the document misleading because international priorities often depended on activities taking place at a national level. He suggested adding words to the effect that "Range States will want to develop national implementation priorities that will contribute to and be part of international priorities. However, Range States may have priorities specific to their national situation that are different from international ones", thus emphasising the fact that the Agreement is primarily concerned with the implementation of national priorities, and international priorities are important, but secondary to those.

46. Ward Hagemeijer also suggested that two further types of international cooperation could be added under point 9, namely "monitoring" and "transboundary implementation of action plans".

47. David Stroud suggested that under 9b) the development of more action plans for intra-African migrants should be reflected.

48. Emmanuel Severre suggested that as poverty reduction was a current topic, the list should include projects targeted towards sustainable development. He also felt that this should be reflected in the types of international cooperation listed under point 9.

49. In response, Bert Lenten pointed out that it was up to individual countries to submit project proposals, but none of this nature had been received so far.

50. It was agreed that a paragraph should be inserted into the document emphasising the role of AEWA activities in tackling poverty alleviation and thus contributing to sustainable development.

51. The meeting then reviewed the projects as listed in the document and discussed them as follows:

A. Species Conservation

Project 3:

52. Olivier Biber considered that this was a step within the development of project 2, and need not be a separate project. The Meeting agreed and project was removed from the list.

Project 4:

53. Sergey Dereliev stated that this also fell within the implementation of the action plan (project 1), and that this proposal could be removed from the list.

Projects 5 and 6:

54. It was agreed that these proposals, listed on pages 4 and 5, could be removed from the list

B. Habitat Conservation

Project 5 on page 5:

55. It was agreed that this was a major priority and would start soon, being a core part of the GEF project, to which AEWA was contributing a total of 1.2 million USD over five years.

Project 4 on page 5:

56. It was agreed that this project, too, should be given high priority.

Project 8 on page 7:

57. Olivier Biber suggested that this project could specify sustainable development and poverty alleviation as a focus, and should be given first priority.

58. It was agreed that the text should be modified to include mention of other regions (Asia, small island states etc.) and to reflect the fact that in Africa only demonstration might be needed, which would affect the cost.

Unnumbered project at the bottom of page 7:

59. It was felt that this very costly project did not appear to fit into the international implementation priorities. Sergey Dereliev would contact the proponents to ask for more specific information and would consult with TC members by e-mail on the outcome. Partial funding might also be a possibility.

60. Considering the remaining proposals in this section, it was decided that the Secretariat should request more information from the proponents and to come back to that to the TC.

C. Management of human activities

Project 9 on page 10:

61. It was decided to leave this project on the list as priority 3, and to await information from the EU before a final decision was taken.

62. The meeting decided that the remaining projects in this section should also be retained on the list.

D. Research and monitoring

63. Regarding the projects in this section, it was decided to keep them on the list, with the exception of projects 17, 23 and 32, and the proposal of Serbia and Montenegro. Project 17 was in its final stage and could therefore be removed. The Meeting agreed to delete project 23 because this would be paid from the core budget of the Agreement. Project 32 was about to be contracted out to Alterra and could therefore also be deleted. It was felt that the projects submitted by Serbia did not meet the criteria set for International Implementation Priorities. Furthermore it was decided to merge projects 21 and 22.

64. The meeting felt that high priority should be given to projects 19 and 27.

E. Education and information

65. The meeting decided to retain projects 33, 34, 36, 37, 39 and 40, and that the Secretariat should develop a new proposal on regional training courses to replace project 35.

66. Project 38 would be removed because they would be funded from the core budget. It was also decided to remove "Elaboration of an AEWA Manual" from the list.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 3.XX IIP for 2006-2008

67. Because this draft resolution is more or less identical to the previous Resolution 2.4 adopted by MOP2, it was suggested that the text could be shortened by making reference to this. The Secretariat agreed to work on this.

11. Proposal for guidance on definition of the term "long-term decline of populations"

68. David Stroud introduced document AEWA/TC 6.9. It was proposed to recommend this definition to MOP3, together with guidance for its application.

69. There was some discussion of the time-frame chosen, but the meeting concluded that the group definition of a 25% decline over 25 years was indeed legitimate, with shorter periods being used if data were not available.

70. Ward Hagemeyer commented that it was preferable to take the geometric mean between maximum and minimum of the population ranges rather than the mid point. David Stroud agreed that this should be revised.

71. The paper was approved, and Yusoof Mungroo thanked David Stroud and his team for their work.

72. David Stroud reminded the meeting that if the AEWA Action Plan was to be modified at MOP3, the new information gained here should be taken into account when working on the modification.

12. Proposal for guidance on defining bio-geographical populations of waterbirds

73. David Stroud introduced document AEWA/TC 6.10, which had also been drafted by a working group, and was intended as an information document for MOP3. He considered that the document was not yet complete, and invited TC members to comment on the conclusions and recommendations immediately, and to provide additional feedback after the meeting.

74. As no substantive comments were put forward, the meeting discussed how to proceed. David Stroud suggested that the document (i.e. Annex 2) could be submitted to MOP3 as a general information paper; in addition the shaded bullet points, worded more proactively, could be included in the TC's report to MOP3 as recommendations from this work.

75. An addition suggested by David Stroud was to include a table summarising population limits by waterbird groups, using up-to-date information and indicating priority groups. He would circulate a modified version of the document to the TC, for later submission to MOP3.

13. Report on the status and trends of bird populations within the Agreement area

76. Sergey Dereliev introduced document AEWA/TC Inf. 6.1, explaining that this was one of seven reports required to be presented to each MOP. There had been a request to develop a new concise format, and a working group had made a proposal, which had been approved by the Standing Committee. Three subcontractors had been asked to submit quotations for the work of preparing this report. One quotation had been submitted by Wetlands International, which had previously been charged with this work. Other quotations had not been forthcoming, as the potential contractor needed access to the Wetlands International database. The Secretariat now requested guidance as to how to proceed.

77. Ward Hagemeyer continued by explaining that the quote submitted by Wetlands International had been much higher than for the report in its previous format. This was because it had included part of the cost of assessing waterbird status, which had not been funded previously. However, as the other contractors would also need this information their costs would be equally high. Funding was needed for the waterbird population estimate, which must be done first.

78. Bert Lenten pointed out that the new format had been expected to be cheaper because it was more concise. He felt this was too expensive a task to be done every three years.

79. Ward Hagemeyer reminded the meeting that AEWA had previously profited from the fact that regular population estimates were being done. Wetlands International had begun this work and made considerable investment, but no longer had funds to continue it. The information gathered was being used by Ramsar and many other institutions, but none of these had so far contributed to the cost. The only reliable funds were coming from the United Kingdom government.

80. Prebren Clausen suggested asking the MOP to bind Parties to contributing to this work, which was obviously necessary before they could be informed adequately.

81. Olivier Biber volunteered to intervene at the forthcoming Ramsar Standing Committee and ask Ramsar to participate in financing the waterbird population estimate.

82. David Stroud agreed, and suggested that the EU might also share the cost, as this information was important for them too. However, the short-term problem as to what to do for MOP3 still needed to be resolved. Production of this report should not be too expensive.

83. Responding, Ward Hagemeyer said that the EU had been approached, but claimed that its rules prohibited funding this type of activity, despite the view that this data would be useful. Ramsar had also been approached, but had no funds available.

84. Bert Lenten stressed that he would like to have such a report to submit to MOP3, but that AEWA lacked the funds to pay for it.

85. The Meeting decided to establish a small working group to discuss this issue that evening.

86. The next day Sergey Dereliev reported back on the outcome of the group's deliberations. As a short-term solution the working group had decided to opt for the preparation of a conservation status report, using funds pledged by Switzerland for preparatory work for MOP3. In addition, Guy-Noël Olivier had also offered financial support in the region of €10,000, which he expected to be able to raise from French hunters. The rest of the cost would be covered by the AEWA core budget.

87. For the longer term the Secretariat would submit a draft resolution to MOP3. This would explain the importance of the issue and the steps taken by the Secretariat to liaise with other MEA Secretariats, and urge countries to pay more attention to this important issue and to direct more voluntary contributions to funding this status report.

14. Proposal for additional species to be included in the AEWA list

88. David Stroud presented document AEWA/TC 6.11 and invited the meeting to discuss further procedure, as outlined on page 3 of the document.

89. There followed a general discussion during which various options were proposed. Bert Lenten stressed that MOP3 might expect that the TC had made some progress in reviewing the list of species that were possible candidates for inclusion in AEWA. In general it was felt that a pragmatic approach should be taken. At the same time it was considered that in the light of developments regarding the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Raptors and Owls, it would not be appropriate to include any of these species in AEWA at the present time. Regarding the inclusion of passerines, the meeting felt that due to lack of information the advantages or disadvantages of including these species in AEWA could not be assessed. The outcome of the discussion was that the focus should be on seabird species.

90. An ad hoc working group was formed to consider this question more closely, and proposed that within the next few weeks the Secretariat should review the seabirds listed in Table 2 of the report and prepare a brief analysis of the available information on populations and threats, noting whether the threat was covered by the current Action Plan. The TC should then be consulted, and would decide which species it would propose to MOP3 for addition to the list.

15. Further development of AEWA

a. Central Asian Flyway

91. Bert Lenten introduced document AEWA/TC Inf. 6.2, and referred to the CAF workshop being organised by CMS and Wetlands International from 10 - 13 June 2005 in New Delhi, in which AEWA was participating under the CMS umbrella. There was considerable geographical and species overlap, e.g. 16 of the 30 countries involved in CAF were AEWA Range States, and 145 of the 274 populations identified for CAF were already covered by the AEWA Action Plan. It was for the countries to decide which option to choose, but if the workshop recommended extending the AEWA area, this proposal would go to MOP3 for its decision. If this was the decision he intended asking MOP for additional

funds to be kept outside the budget to ensure that the current AEWA activities were not adversely affected.

92. The meeting felt that an extension of the AEWA area would not be a problem, and it would await the outcome of the workshop.

93. Jasmin Kanza stated that while the position of the TC and Standing Committee was clear, it was important to consider the institutional arrangements between the mother convention and the daughter agreement, so that any decisions followed established procedures in informing, advising and obtaining support within the mother convention.

94. Rachelle Adam pointed out that AEWA was an independent MEA and there was no legal obligation for it to request the approval of CMS before amending the Agreement and/or its Annexes. According to the Agreement, Parties could propose amendments to the Agreement and/or Annexes up until 150 days prior to the opening of the MOP.

b. Migratory Raptor Agreement

95. Bert Lenten introduced document AEWA/TC Inf. 6.3 and reported that it was not yet clear if raptors were endangered and if there was justification for such an agreement. No decision was needed now as the outcome of consultations would go first to the CMS Meeting of the Parties, before a possible decision at AEWA MOP4.

96. David Stroud added that NatureBureau had established a website that included a consultation document, status report and a short questionnaire on the subject, which people were encouraged to complete before the set deadline (www.naturebureau.co.uk/cmsraptors).

16. AEWA Budget 2006-2008

a. Proposal for reducing costs linked to meetings of the Technical Committee

97. Although this was a subject for the Standing Committee, Bert Lenten considered that the TC should be given an insight into the current financial situation. It was still being revised, but as it now stood, the budget covered only the running the Secretariat and information material, and included no allocation for activities. It was made up of a core budget from existing Parties, plus the contributions from new parties to fund additional projects.

98. All the Bonn-based agencies were suffering losses of 25% of their budgets because of the dollar exchange rate. The budget for the coming triennium included a proposal to reduce the number of TC meetings per triennium to two. This would result in considerable savings, but would require more contact by e-mail etc. intersessionally, and a special forum on the website to facilitate this.

99. In addition it was planned to refer to the UN Scale of Assessment when assessing delegates' entitlement to funding to attend meetings. Already for this meeting documents had been produced only in English, and there was again no French interpretation. It was not clear if this could remain so because it depended on the future TC members, but he considered it an important signal to the Standing Committee that the TC was trying to make savings.

100. Bert Lenten estimated this would be 70,000 USD for the triennium. He was trying to make savings without reducing activities, and to keep the burden for the Parties as low as possible.

101. Asked to make a decision on these questions, the meeting concluded that the number of meetings could be reduced, but that these should be longer, e.g. five days, to allow for issues to be completed.

102. It was also suggested that funds should be made available for a very small workshop or workshops between the TC meetings, preferably back to back with other meetings, and that communication between meetings must be improved.

103. The regional representatives were asked to check within their regions if French language documents were required and to report back to the Secretariat before a final decision was made on this.

104. There was also agreement on the proposal no. 4 regarding funding of delegates.

105. Bert Lenten would include in his report to the MOP a statement to the fact that due to lack of funding, not all the international reviews required by the Agreement could be undertaken.

17. Progress and Final reports:

a. AFRING final report for 2004

106. Sergey Dereliev presented document AEWA/TC Inf. 6.6, and reported that good progress had been made on this project so far. Training courses were an important part of this project and trainers from several European ringing schemes had been assisting. It was hoped to secure 50,000 Euros to continue the project in 2005, and to develop an AFRING database.

b. Progress report on the pilot study/review of potential from waterbird ringing recovery analyses

107. Sergey Dereliev referred to document AEWA/TC Inf. 6.7 and to a letter dated 3 May 2005 from EURING addressed to the Executive Secretary. There had been no progress on the project for more than a year, and the Secretariat requested advice on how to proceed with what it considered a very important project.

108. After some discussion it was agreed that the Executive Secretary would contact EURING and attempt to resolve the tensions that appeared to have arisen, and would report back to the TC as soon as possible.

c. Rehabilitation of important migratory waterbird sites that have been degraded by invasive aquatic weeds in Africa

109. Sergey Dereliev reported that the final report (document AEWA/TC Inf. 6.8) had been received and would be published on the AEWA website, and possibly also as a CD-Rom for wider distribution in Africa.

110. It was agreed that conservation guidelines should be extracted from the document for presentation to the Meeting of Parties, and that future contracts of this nature should specify this as a requirement.

d. AEWA communication strategy

111. Bert Lenten presented document AEWA/TC Inf. 6.9, which had been discussed last year by the Standing Committee, where it had been agreed to send it to MOP3 for adoption. It would be the task of the JPO to implement the strategy, which was important not only for the Secretariat and Standing Committee, but should also improve communication for the TC.

e. Review of the guidelines on national legislation

112. Bert Lenten reported that a consultant had been contracted in 2004 to finalise these, which were considered too long and not sufficiently user-friendly, but that no progress had been made as the IUCN counterpart had been ill. The Secretariat currently had a consultant with a law background, who would continue this work once preparation for MOP3 was completed, and would publish this by the end of 2005, when the consultant's contract expired.

f. GROMS

113. Bert Lenten gave an update on progress on this ongoing question. A CMS consultant was currently reviewing the feasibility of the system, and was also consulting regional sponsors and the German government on how it could be optimised and implemented. His report would be passed to the Standing Committee as soon as it was available.

114. Ward Hagemeyer reminded the meeting that the TC had already given its opinion, and enquired what would happen to that decision if the consultant's view was positive.

115. Bert Lenten confirmed that the opinion of the TC had been communicated to the expert, but remarked that there would be no funds available for this project in the coming triennium.

116. Sergey Dereliev reported that there would be a working group meeting before the final report was drafted, and that he had proposed that the TC should be invited to appoint a member to attend this meeting, which would probably be a teleconference. Preben Clausen volunteered for this meeting.

g. Progress on phasing out of lead shot

117. Bert Lenten reported that although Parties were obliged to report, only Sweden had so far done so. The others would be reminded to submit their progress reports before MOP3.

h. Update on the African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project

118. Ward Hagemeyer reported, as he had at previous meetings, that preparatory work on this project continued, and that it had meanwhile been formally approved by the GEF Council. UNEP had now asked Wetlands International to convert it into UNEP-compatible format, which was proving a problem as UNOPS, which was running the project, had provided no extra funding for this work. Despite the fact that the partners were impatient for it to begin, and that co-funding had been waiting in many countries since 2003, progress was very slow, and details of the project itself had still to be discussed. He feared that the project, which would make an important contribution to waterbirds, could lose momentum if this situation continued.

i. Developing criteria for inclusion of projects into the IIP

119. The TC decided to adjourn discussion of this item in view of its decision the previous day that a strategic plan was required before additional criteria could be developed.

120. The Secretariat agreed to ensure that this would be done between MOP3 and MOP4, to ensure that the plan could be implemented in 2008.

18. Project proposals to be submitted to the European Commission

121. Introducing document AEWA/TC 6.17, Bert Lenten recalled that the last TC meeting had decided to ask the EU, which was in the process of acceding to the Agreement, for a voluntary contribution, and announced that 50,000 Euros would be donated in 2005. This contribution might be doubled in the following year.

122. The working group had compiled a list of possible projects to be undertaken with this funding, and the TC was now being asked to prioritise these.

123. After some discussion the meeting decided to propose giving priority to the report on status and trends for MOP4 (Action 3.3), to be followed by improving survey and monitoring capacity for migratory waterbirds with a focus on Africa (Action 3.3).

19. Proposal for guidance on determining priorities for AEWA financial support

124. Introducing document AEWA/TC 6.18, David Stroud explained that the last TC meeting had agreed that a working group should develop a framework of criteria to guide the Secretariat in judging projects for funding. This paper was a draft for discussion.

125. The meeting made various suggestions for modifications, and it was agreed that David Stroud would present a revised draft of the document the next day.

20. Proposal for development of an online format for National Reporting to MOP

126. Robert Pople gave a presentation on the online reporting system WCMC had developed for IOSEA (www.ioseaturtles.org/report). There was no loss of information compared to previous reporting formats. He explained that the use of checkboxes not only made submitting the report easier, but also allowed analysis of the information by means of various queries.

127. He described the secure system protected by user name and password, which could be shared with other contributors as required. In addition to the "editor" option for submitting reports, there was also a "viewer" function open to anyone, as well as the possibility to download complete reports as PDF files.

128. A function could be included to notify the Secretariat or monitoring body of updates, allowing them to be approved before going online. An additional advantage was that after the first submission the data could be edited, thus simplifying reporting in later years.

129. Asked about the feedback so far, he replied that IOSEA had an extremely high reporting rate, in excess of 90%, and that this was at least partially thanks to the easier process.

130. Bert Lenten remarked that the harmonisation of reporting systems was a recurring topic within CMS and AEWA, which was considering a project on a system whereby, for example, AEWA data entered would automatically be included in the report to CMS. He felt that in addition to simplifying reporting, this was a good tool to disseminate information about ongoing projects.

131. The cost should not be too high, as the system was already running and it might be possible to purchase the rights to adapt it for CMS and AEWA. It should also not be difficult to add French as a second language.

132. Ward Hagemeyer reported that WCMC would be building on this system for the GEF project, so adapting it for national reports should not be difficult.

133. David Stroud remarked that the UK rapporteur under the turtles MoU had been very positive about the ease of input and production of summaries.

134. The TC agreed to recommend to the Standing Committee that this system should be developed further.

National reports for MOP3

135. It was agreed that national reports contain a wealth of information and are an important tool to measure the progress made in implementation of the Agreement. The meeting felt that these reports should be analysed and this information should be fed back to MOP3.

136. Rachelle Adam proposed and offered to draft a resolution to urge those countries that had not delivered their national reports before MOP3 to do so before end of the year. The meeting agreed to this proposal.

21. Proposal for changes in the modus operandi of the TC

137. Bert Lenten introduced document AEWA/TC 6.19, which had been drafted by a small working group following discussion at the last TC meeting. The proposed changes reflected various developments that had already or might soon take place, e.g. the possible inclusion of the CAF countries into AEWA.

138. The text of the Agreement specifies that the TC should be made up of not more than nine regional representatives, so it was recommended that the regions be redefined rather than amending the Agreement. Moreover, it would be possible to review and change the composition of these regions again at any future time.

139. Despite some reservations as to the suggested divisions, the meeting agreed to recommend the changes outlined in the document to the Standing Committee for submission to MOP3.

140. The meeting also established that while it was up to the regions to nominate their regional representatives, for the sake of continuity the TC recommended the re-election of some regional representatives and some experts for a further period of three years.

141. Moving on to consider Annex IV to document AEWA/TC 6.19, Bert Lenten proposed that the work plan was an internal document for the TC, and need not be presented to the Meeting of the Parties, except perhaps as an information document.

142. Ward Hagemeyer felt that the work plan was a valuable tool that should be more easily accessible. It should be kept up to date and posted on the website for information.

143. Bert Lenten agreed and confirmed that it would be available on the internet and kept up to date as soon as the new forum was running.

144. Bert Lenten then referred to the draft resolution concerning future institutional arrangements for the TC, and invited final comments on this.

145. It was agreed to delete the passage on adoption of the work programme of the TC.

146. After some discussion as to whether alternates should also be appointed for experts, the meeting agreed to put this to the Standing Committee. Bert Lenten stressed that the system did not really work in practice, and that alternates were often not aware that they had been appointed as such.

22. AEWA contribution to 2010 target

147. Bert Lenten raised the question of the 2010 biodiversity target, and whether AEWA's activities were contributing to meeting this.

148. There was agreement that implementing the priorities already outlined would contribute to this, but that it was difficult to demonstrate achievements without clear indicators.

149. Olivier Biber suggested that these should be in the form of precise figures, years and percentages of improvement to be achieved, and could be part of the strategic plan to be developed in the next triennium.

150. However, others felt that there was not sufficient baseline information available, and that there was insufficient time for this approach.

151. It was suggested that a baseline year should be agreed upon, and Articles III and IV of the Agreement reviewed and assessed with regard to success or failure as a measure of their contribution to the 2010 target.

152. The meeting agreed that MOP3 should be asked to endorse this activity, giving details of baseline, indicators etc. and thus making clear that the TC was working on the issue.

153. It was suggested by Olivier Biber that this might be part of the recommendation on the Strategic Plan, as a clear strategy was also needed here, but Ward Hagemeyer was of the opinion that this was already suggested in documents using resource-related indicators, e.g. waterbird numbers.

154. It was decided that a small intersessional working group, consisting of Olivier Biber, Ward Hagemeyer, Charles Mlingwa, Robert Pople and David Stroud would start work on this and on the Strategic Plan as soon as MOP gave its go-ahead.

23. Register of international projects

155. Sergey Dereliev invited discussion on this register, which had been established by MOP1 with the intention of disseminating information about projects within the Agreement area. The register was published on the website, and the TC had been instructed to update it regularly. However, this had not been done, and the list was now considerably out of date.

156. The meeting considered that a system whereby information for the register could be submitted regularly through the AEWA website would be preferable to the current system, and it was therefore agreed to close the register temporarily, and re-establish it once online reporting was in place.

24. TC Work Plan

157. The meeting reviewed the Work Plan by section, and made comments as follows:

Establishing national TC focal points

158. Sergey Dereliev reported that ten countries, i.e. 20% of Parties, had responded and nominated focal points. The Secretariat would continue to press Parties until focal points had been named in all countries.

TC Report to MOP3

159. Preben Clausen remarked that some of the issues listed here had not been finalised and were not on the agenda for this meeting, i.e. the status of mallard, eider and pintail populations. Work was currently being done on these and information would be submitted for the Chairman's report shortly.

MOP2 tasks for TC

160. David Stroud asked if the small grants fund had meanwhile been established. Sergey Dereliev replied that this was not the case, and it was proving difficult to implement Resolution 2.9.

International status reviews

161. Sergey Dereliev reminded the meeting that many of the reviews listed would be based on national reports, but as these were not available there was no information for this meeting. The deadline for submission of national reports was 24 June 2005, so the Secretariat hoped to receive them all and would keep the TC posted on progress.

162. David Stroud remarked that the action plan required seven reviews to be presented at each MOP, but that six of these had never been undertaken.

25. Implementation of previously adopted International Single Species Action Plans

163. Sergey Dereliev reported that only three of the AEWA action plans had been adopted to date. These had been published in paper versions at the end of 2004 and were also available as PDF files on the website. There was nothing to report on implementation of the Great Snipe and Black-winged Pratincole plans, but the Secretariat had co-funded a pilot study by Birdlife International on breeding success of the Sociable Lapwing in Kazakhstan, which to his knowledge had been the only activity so far.

164. Rachelle Adam pointed out that the implementation of action plans was the responsibility of the Secretariat, which could however delegate the task to a working group. Sergey Dereliev reported that

this had been proving difficult as it depended on finding specialists for each species prepared to lead such a group, and that this might have financial implications.

165. It was concluded that the Secretariat should make greater efforts to ensure that working groups were established to implement each action plan.

26. New and outstanding international single species action plans

166. The meeting expressed the hope that as many of these action plans would be ready for adoption in time for MOP3 as possible. A general request made was that where amended drafts were to be re-circulated to the TC, this should be done via a link from which the files could be downloaded, rather than as e-mail attachments.

Corncrake

167. The meeting discussed various amendments, and the TC approved the plan with these changes.

White-headed Duck

168. The meeting approved the plan with the amendments as discussed. More information should be obtained from the South Asian region.

Ferruginous Duck

169. Amendments to this plan were also discussed and noted. However, as the deadline for comments (15 May) had not yet expired, the Secretariat would circulate the plan to the TC after that date for final approval.

Light-bellied Brent Goose

170. Several amendments were noted. However, as the deadline for comments on this draft was 31 May, it would also be circulated to the TC again for final review. The document possibly required more in-depth revision, so it might not be finished in time for MOP3.

Northern Bald Ibis

171. The Secretariat noted various comments, and the meeting decided that the plan would be dealt with in the same way as that for the Ferruginous Duck.

172. Sergey Dereliev also reported that an action plan for the **Maccoa Duck** was being drafted in South Africa, and would be circulated to the TC in the near future for comments prior to consultation with the range states.

173. The situation regarding the action plan for the **Lesser White-fronted Goose** was more complicated. An action plan was first prepared in 1996, before AEWa came into force. The Secretariat had obtained voluntary contributions from Germany, Sweden and Norway. Finland had organised a workshop to start the procedure to update the action plan. The workshop had been held at the beginning of April, and a first draft of the plan was expected shortly. The final draft was scheduled to be circulated to the TC at the end of July, and hopefully it could be presented at MOP3.

174. The action plan for the **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** had been in the pipeline for many years, and was still not close to completion. New comments on the latest draft had been received from Germany, but were still not forthcoming from France or Denmark. The UK was providing some funding for a scientific study on population survival rates and impact of hunting. A research proposal from Dr. Bart Ebbinge of Alterra was presented to the TC. The Committee agreed on the proposal and on the requested co-funding from AEWa. The project would be contracted out by the Secretariat to Alterra (the Netherlands), which would do the research together with NERI (Denmark).

Draft resolution 3.XX: Adoption of single species action plans

175. Sergey Dereliev briefly presented the draft resolution.

176. David Stroud stressed that the resolution should also refer to the implementation of the plans at international and national level. He suggested inserting a new paragraph strongly urging contracting parties to implement these plans, as well as a paragraph urging the Secretariat to establish a mechanism for their international coordination.

177. Rachelle Adams asked if the Technical Committee rather than the Standing Committee should not be instructed by the MOP to adopt single species action plans intersessionally between two MOPs.

178. David Stroud recalled that Recommendation 2.1 on the Dark-bellied Brent Goose action plan appeared to have established a process by which the MOP authorised the Standing Committee to adopt the action plan interrimly. He felt the new resolution should be consistent with this.

179. Olivier Biber requested that this be checked, and done if it was so. Otherwise he felt it would be quicker for the MOP to instruct the TC to finalise the adoption of action plans intersessionally. If this was not specified in the Rules of Procedure then the shortest procedure should be chosen.

27. Other reports

Report on the EU bag statistics workshop

180. Guy-Noël Olivier, who had attended the workshop held in Tour du Valat in March 2005 on behalf of AEWA, referred to document AEWA/TC Inf. 6.11 and gave an oral report of his view of the proceedings. He considered that hunting bag statistics would become as important as ringing had been in the past.

181. The meeting had been organised by the European Commission and many organisations working within the EU had been represented. The meeting had discussed ways to harmonise EU bag statistics. As the legitimate representative of hunters in the EU 25, FACE had been approached regarding coordination of the European network to monitor hunting bags. This network would include experts from institutions and international organisations (yet to be clarified) under the aegis of the European Commission.

28. Draft report of the Chair of the TC to MOP3

182. Yussoof Mungroo presented in a first rough draft, an overview of activities of the TC Chair for presentation to the MOP, and asked for the TC's comments.

183. Ward Hagemeyer suggested that the report should be presented orally, accompanied by the current work plan in tabular format.

184. Olivier Biber agreed, and felt the table should summarise the outcome of all TC meetings and intersessional activities, rather than listing them chronologically. He also suggested highlighting the most important achievements in some way.

185. Yussoof Mungroo requested the committee members to send him their comments on the content by e-mail in due course. Points that had arisen during TC6 would of course be included.

29. Date and venue of the next meeting of the Technical Committee

186. Valentin Serebryakov informed the meeting that the Ukraine intended to host the next meeting of the TC, in the Crimea. Because a new government had come to power in January, the formal decision had not yet been taken, but was expected soon.

187. On behalf of the Executive Secretary, Sergey Dereliev thanked the Ukraine for this generous offer. The Secretariat would remain in close contact with the Ukraine, especially regarding the date of the next meeting, which should be decided after MOP3.

30. Any other business

Draft resolution on national reports

188. Rachelle Adam circulated Draft Resolution on National Reports. The meeting approved the text, and agreed that the resolution would be recommended for adoption by MOP3.

AEWA funding guidelines (as finalised by David Stroud)

189. David Stroud circulated a further draft of these guidelines, and recommended that they should be made publicly available on the AEWA website.

190. The committee requested that in the first paragraph of the conditions the word "annual" be replaced by "next".

191. These guidelines would be recommended to MOP3 for adoption.

Avian influenza

192. Ward Hagemeyer enquired about progress on this issue.

193. Sergey Dereliev reported that in accordance with the decision of the TC5 he had obtained the position of the CMS Scientific Council and made it available to the members and observers of the TC. At its meeting in March 2004, the CMS Scientific Council had decided to establish a working group that should collaborate with Wetlands International and look more closely at the issue of avian influenza. The working group had been requested to report to the next meeting of the Scientific Council.

194. Ward Hagemeyer would contact the officer in charge at CMS to enquire about progress in the work being done by the CMS Scientific Council Working Group.

31. Closure of meeting

195. Olivier Biber thanked the Government of Mauritius for hosting this meeting, and thanked everyone involved for their hospitality. He also expressed thanks to the Secretariat for their hard work.

196. Sergey Dereliev also thanked the host government and especially Yussoof Mungroo and his team, whose excellent planning had made things so easy for the Secretariat.

197. Yussoof Mungroo said that it had been an honour to host the meeting, and that he hoped everyone had been comfortable. He in turn expressed his appreciation of the efforts of his staff, and that of the agricultural services, the agricultural information division, as well as of the National Park and Conservation Service.

198. The meeting closed at 14.30.