



5th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

14 – 18 May 2012, La Rochelle, France

“Migratory waterbirds and people - sharing wetlands”

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE
AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY
WATERBIRDS (AEWA) OVER THE PERIOD 2009-2012**

Introduction

The AEWA Standing Committee was established at the 2nd Session of the Meeting of Parties (Germany, 2002) by Resolution 2.6. According to this Resolution the Standing Committee shall:

- (a) Carry out between sessions of the Meeting of the Parties, such interim activity on behalf of the Meeting as may be necessary;
- (b) Make recommendations for consideration at the next session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- (c) Oversee, on behalf of the Parties, the development and execution of the Secretariat’s budget as derived from the Trust Fund and other sources, and also all aspects of fund-raising undertaken by the Secretariat in order to carry out specific functions authorized by the Meeting of the Parties;
- (d) Oversee, as the representative of the Meeting of the Parties, the implementation of policy by the Secretariat and conduct of the Secretariat’s programmes;
- (e) Provide guidance and advice to the Secretariat on implementation of the Agreement, on the preparation of meetings, and on any other matters relating to the exercise of the Secretariat’s functions brought to it by the Secretariat;
- (f) Represent the Meeting of the Parties, vis-à-vis the Government of the host country of the Secretariat’s headquarters, the United Nations Environment Programme and other international organizations for consideration of matters relating to the Agreement and its Secretariat;
- (g) Act as bureau at the sessions of the Meeting of the Parties, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Meeting of the Parties;
- (h) Report to the Meeting of the Parties on the activities that have been carried out between ordinary sessions of the Meeting of the Parties;
- (i) Perform any other functions that may be entrusted to it by the Meeting of the Parties.

Additional responsibilities were decided by MOP4 through Resolutions 4.6 and 4.17, as follows:

- (j) Oversee and provide guidance on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for AEWA 2009- 2017;
- (k) Take up the tasks defined in Resolution 4.6 regarding the Implementation Review Process (IRP) until a further decision of the MOP:
 - (i) Upon receiving information on adverse effects or potential adverse effects on either migratory waterbirds or on their sites and habitats as a result of human activities, the StC shall submit the information to the Party in whose territory the above activities occur who shall respond immediately, addressing the incident under question.
 - (ii) In agreement with the Party concerned, the StC may request a mission to assess the impact of the activity at issue on waterbirds, or on their sites and habitats on the spot.
 - (iii) Upon the conclusion of its on-site assessment, the mission shall report to the StC on its findings. Based on these findings, the StC shall make recommendations to the Party concerned as to preventing or mitigating the impact at issue on waterbirds, or on their sites and habitats.

(iv) The Party concerned will ensure that any measures undertaken regarding the activity, site or habitat under issue will be in accordance with its obligations under the Agreement and will be based on the precautionary principle. The Party concerned will inform the StC as to the above measures at the earliest opportunity, but no later than the next meeting of the StC.

(v) The StC shall prepare and submit to each ordinary session of the Meetings of the Parties, a report on its operations in the framework of the IRP;

The Standing Committee consists, at present, of representatives of six Contracting Parties being: Norway (Chair, Regional Representative (RR) for Europe and Central Asia), Uganda (Vice-Chair, RR for Eastern and Southern Africa), Ghana (RR for Western and Central Africa), Syria (RR for Middle East and Northern Africa), the Netherlands (Depositary) and France (Host MOP5).

Since its establishment in 2002, the Committee met annually between MOP2 and MOP3 and, due to budget limitations, only twice between MOP3 and MOP4 and twice during the ensuing quadrennium, between MOP4 and MOP5.

This report consists of a brief overview of the main activities of the Standing Committee since MOP4.

Meetings of the Standing Committee

During the period 2009-2012, two meetings of the Standing Committee have taken place, being the sixth and seventh meetings respectively from 16-17 June 2010 (The Hague, the Netherlands) and from 26-27 November 2011 (Bergen, Norway). Meetings of the Standing Committee have previously been held at the seat of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat at the UN Campus in Bonn. However, during this quadrennium the two Standing Committee Meetings were both organized “back-to-back” with other international meetings in an effort to save time and funds. Hence the sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee took place in The Hague, Netherlands following the 15th Anniversary Celebration of the Agreement and the seventh Meeting of the Standing Committee took place in Bergen, Norway following the 10th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS COP). Although this arrangement of organizing meetings back-to-back did cut down the overall amount of travel of participants, it was, in hindsight, perhaps not as efficient as standalone meetings, due to the volume of preparations for multiple meetings.

At both meetings of the Standing Committee, progress made regarding the implementation of the Agreement was reviewed. The Standing Committee received written reports, which were presented by the Secretariat e.g. on the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the International Implementation Tasks (IIT) and noted that despite the limited resources available, good progress has been made in certain areas of work.

The Standing Committee also reviewed the actual financial situation based on the overviews presented by the Secretariat regarding income and expenditures since MOP4. The Standing Committee noted that the Secretariat does its utmost to ensure that the financial situation is and will remain a healthy one. The Standing Committee also agreed on how to allocate funds left-over in the core budget due to maternity leaves and the nomination of the former Executive Secretary to Acting Deputy Executive Secretary of the CMS Secretariat on a 50 per cent basis for over a year.

At each meeting, the Standing Committee received an update on the progress made regarding the implementation of the Communication Strategy. The Secretariat has also made significant progress in this area, taking into account the limited resources available. The World Migratory Bird Day campaign continued to grow and gain international recognition. The Standing Committee has again taken note of the success of WMBD, which has been celebrated annually since 2006.

Furthermore the Secretariat provided information on progress made regarding international reviews and several Single Species Action Plans, some of which are new (Slaty Egret, Bewick’s Swan, Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose) and others that are being updated (Red-breasted Goose and Sociable Lapwing). In addition, the first AEWA Species Management Plan is being developed for the Svalbard Pink-footed Goose population.

In the past inter-sessional period the Standing Committee, as the implementing body for the Implementation Review Process (IRP), dealt with three cases: Syria – illegal hunting of the globally threatened Sociable Lapwing, Montenegro – economic development threatening the salina of Ulcinj and Bulgaria – a windfarming project adjacent to Lake Durankulak putting the globally threatened Red-breasted Goose at risk. A complete IRP report is presented in document AEWA/MOP 5.16.

The 7th Meeting of the Standing Committee, which was the last before MOP5 was a very intensive meeting. During this meeting nearly all substantive documents and 18 draft Resolutions were reviewed. The meeting agreed that these draft documents could be submitted to MOP5 for formal adoption. In addition the Committee adopted Terms of Reference for the regional Standing Committee members (attached as Annex I). Furthermore the Committee reviewed and instructed the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat concerning the recruitment procedure for the new AEWA Executive Secretary.

For a full report on the 6th and 7th Meetings of the Standing Committee, please visit the AEWA website: http://www.unep-awa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc_overview.htm

Other activities of the Chair

The Chair of the Standing Committee has been involved in the recruitment processes for the post of Technical Officer (P-3) and for the post of Associate Programme Officer (P-2). In addition, the Chair has been involved in the interim arrangement and subsequent recruitment process for the post of Executive Secretary (P-4), together with the other members of the Standing Committee.

The Chair also participated in the AEWA 15th Anniversary Celebrations in The Hague, Netherlands on the 14-15 June 2010, where he chaired a Working Group session.

The Executive Secretary and Acting Executive Secretary respectively contacted the Chair at regular intervals throughout the quadrennium in order to provide an update on the activities of the Secretariat.

During that period, the chair has liaised with CMS personnel on relevant issues, including the Executive Secretary of the CMS. One important issue was the recruitment process for a permanent Executive Secretary of AEWA.

ANNEX 1

Responsibilities of the Regional Members of the Standing Committee Terms of Reference

For at least five of the seven members of the Standing Committee the appointment is based upon the principle of balanced geographical distribution, reflecting two representatives from the Europe and Central Asia region, one representative from the Middle East and Northern Africa region, one representative from the Western and Central Africa region, and one representative from the Eastern and Southern Africa region. The membership of the Committee shall be reviewed at each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties. The term of office of regional members (and their alternates) shall expire at the close of the second ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties following the session at which they were originally elected.

Each regional member acts on behalf of its entire region. In performing their role as regional representatives, members are expected to accomplish following duties:

1. Circulate all relevant correspondence received by the Secretariat to each Party in their region;
2. Inform all Parties in their region about the proceedings and decisions made during AEWA Standing Committee meetings;
3. Lead consultations within Parties in their region to decide on common AEWA regional issues;
4. Follow up on requests made by the Secretariat in correspondence with Parties of their region e.g. by promoting the revision of comments or enquiries regarding draft meeting reports, completion of National Reports; provision of inputs on documents, completion of questionnaires on specific issues related to the Agreement;
5. Ensure, to the extent possible, a coordinated flow of information from Parties in the region to the Secretariat and vice versa;
6. Promote the drafting and/or revision of relevant documents to be examined by the Meeting of the Parties at its sessions e.g. proposals for amendments to the Agreement and its annexes¹, draft Resolutions and Recommendations²;
7. Coordinate the compilation of information and the completion of reports on relevant activities in their region to be submitted to meetings of the Committee, and to any regional meetings that take place during the MOP or intersessionally;
8. Receive from Parties in the region, and coordinate where appropriate the formulation and the submission of proposals to the Chairperson of the Committee for a decision by postal procedure³;
9. Encourage Parties in the region to update the Secretariat with actual information about the national Focal Points as well as promptly inform the Secretariat in cases of changes;
10. Maintain regular contact to Non-Party Range States in their region and promote their accession to AEWA.

¹ As a general rule proposed amendments and the reason for them shall be communicated to the Agreement Secretariat not less than 150 days before the opening of the session of the next Meeting the Parties (Article X 3. AEWA).

² As a general rule the official documents for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, including draft Resolutions and Recommendations, as well as proposals submitted by Parties, the Standing Committee, the Technical Committee, the Meeting Committee and the Secretariat, shall be distributed in the official languages by the Secretariat to the Parties at least 60 days before the opening of the next session of the Meeting of the Parties (Rule 10, Rules of Procedure for the sessions of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA).

³ Any Standing Committee member or the Secretariat may make a proposal to the Chairperson for a decision by postal procedure. The Secretariat shall communicate the proposal to the Standing Committee members for comments within 60 days of communication; any comments received within these limits shall also be so communicated (Rule 33, Rules of Procedure of the AEWA Standing Committee).