



6th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

9-14 November 2015, Bonn, Germany

“Making flyway conservation happen”

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA) OVER THE PERIOD 2012-2015

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:

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(4) 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.

(5) 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;

Resolution 5.17 re-confirms the above-listed tasks and further requests the StC to contribute where appropriate to activities identified in Annex 1 of CMS Resolution 10.9 *Future structure and strategies of the CMS Family*.

As approved by resolution 5.17, the Standing Committee consists of five regional representatives being: Norway (*Chair, Regional Representative (RR) for Europe and Central Asia*), France (*RR for Europe and Central Asia*), Uganda (*Vice-Chair, RR for Eastern and Southern Africa*), Ghana (*RR for Western and Central Africa*) and Algeria (*RR for Middle East and Northern Africa*). The StC also includes a representative of the Depositary (*the Netherlands*) and a representative of the host country for the next session of the Meeting of Parties (not applicable in the case of MOP6).

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

Meetings of the Standing Committee

Three Standing Committee meetings were held between MOP5 and MOP6.

- The 8th Meeting of the Standing Committee meeting was held back-to-back with MOP5 on 18 May 2012 in La Rochelle, France. The main purpose of this meeting was the election of officers Chair and Vice-Chair) of the StC.
- The 9th Meeting of the Standing Committee was held in Trondheim, Norway, on 18-19 September 2013, at the kind invitation of the Norwegian Environment Agency. Information about the meeting is available at: <http://www.unep-awea.org/en/meeting/9th-meeting-awea-standing-committee>
- The 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee was held in Kampala, Uganda on 8-10 July 2015, at the kind invitation of the Ugandan Ministry for Environment, Tourism and Antiquities. Information about the meeting is available at:
- <http://www.unep-awea.org/en/meeting/10th-meeting-awea-standing-committee>

At the 9th and 10th 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, the International Implementation Tasks (IIT) and the African Initiative and noted that, despite the limited resources available, good progress had 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 MOP5. 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 a withdrawal of 70,000 Euros from the reserve fund to allow the production of some reports for consideration at MOP6 and an IRP on-the spot-assessment mission.

The StC also revised the Modus Operandi of the AEWA Small Grant Fund.

Furthermore update on progress was received regarding international reviews and several International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs), some of which are new (for the conservation of the Grey Crownedcrane, Taiga Bean Goose, Long-tailed Duck, Eurasian Curlew and Shoebill) and two other that are being updated (Lesser White-fronted Goose and Northern Bald Ibis). In addition, criteria for prioritising AEWA populations for Action and Management planning were discussed.

In the past inter-sessional period the Standing Committee, as the implementing body for the Implementation Review Process (IRP), dealt with four cases:

- Syria – illegal hunting of the globally threatened Sociable Lapwing;
- Montenegro – economic development threatening the salina of Ulcinj; and
- Bulgaria – a wind farming project adjacent to Lake Durankulak putting the globally threatened Red-breasted Goose at risk;
- Iceland - plans for lowland afforestation threatening breeding habitats of AEWA-listed waterbird species.

A potential IRP has been examined and is still under consideration in France and related to a further windfarm development in an area overlapping a site designated for the conservation of the Eurasian Crane as a stopover site. A complete IRP report is presented in document AEWA/MOP 6.17.

At its 9th 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 since 2006.

At the 9th Meeting of the Standing Committee, a decision was made with regard to the recruitment of the AEWA Executive Officer and the future collaboration with the CMS Family (see Annex 1).

The 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee, which was the last before MOP6 was a very intensive meeting. A special focus was given for the first time to seabird conservation. During this meeting nearly all substantive documents and 20 draft resolutions for MOP6 were reviewed. The meeting agreed that these draft documents could be submitted to MOP6 for formal adoption.

Other activities of the Chair of the Standing Committee

The Chair of the StC has been involved in the interim arrangement and subsequent recruitment process for the post of Executive Secretary (P-4).

The Acting Executive Secretaries and the Executive Secretary respectively contacted the Chair at regular intervals throughout the triennium 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.

ANNEX I

Decision of the Standing Committee with regard to the recruitment of the new AEWA Executive Officer and the future collaboration with the CMS-family

Acknowledging the importance of the Future Shape Process to increase efficiency and enhance synergies in the whole CMS Family, and AEWA Resolution 5.17 that requests the Standing Committee “to contribute, where appropriate, to activities identified in Annex 1 of CMS Resolution 10.9”.

Aware of the greater international picture coming from Rio+20 and other processes stressing the importance of developing further synergies among MEAs,

Cognizant of the need to appoint an Executive Officer as soon as possible, and of the important role that AEWA Resolution 5.21 sets out for the Standing Committee in making the final selection,

Understanding the opportunity in timing that the appointment process of the AEWA Executive Officer presents to developing stronger synergies between AEWA and the CMS in accordance with the Future Shape Process and AEWA Resolution 5.17.

The Standing Committee:

1. *Decides* to take a decision to agree with the appointment of the Executive Officer on an interim basis to be reviewed by MOP6 in light of a possible appointment of a Joint Executives Secretary as described below;
2. *Requests* the interim Executive Officer of AEWA and *invites* the Executive Secretary of CMS to develop further synergies between AEWA and CMS and take actions to merge common services and common areas in an effort to redirect the focus of the Secretariats towards strengthening implementation support;
3. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of CMS in consultation with the Executive Officer of AEWA to bring a proposal to the AEWA MOP6 on a possible joint Executive Secretary for AEWA and CMS for its consideration. The proposal should include an analysis of the effectiveness of such an arrangement, the task and functions that the proposed Joint Executive Secretary would include, and what resources such an arrangement would redirect towards implementation support priorities;
4. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of CMS to bring the proposal of a Joint Executive Secretary for AEWA and CMS to the CMS for its consideration.