

REPORT OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES (MOP3)

INTRODUCTION

The third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) was held at the Conference Centre Hotel Meridien, in Dakar, Senegal, from 23 to 27 October 2005 at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Senegal. A list of participants at the Meeting is attached to the present report.

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. Opening the Third Meeting of Parties (MOP3) to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), Mr Abdoulaye Ndiaye, Deputy Director of the West African Programme of Wetlands International, welcomed delegates to Senegal. He informed the Meeting that the Official Opening Ceremony would take place on 24 October. In the meantime, the host country would do everything possible to facilitate the work of the MOP. The Chair of the Standing Committee (Mr Emmanuel Severre, Tanzania) would chair the current plenary session until the election of a meeting Chair and Vice-Chair had been completed.

2. The Chair of the Standing Committee thanked the Government of Senegal for undertaking the responsibility of hosting the MOP and expressed his appreciation of the high standard of meeting facilities and the warm welcome afforded to delegates.

3. The Chair of the Standing Committee noted that the MOP coincided with the emergence of avian influenza as a global issue, the potential role of migratory birds in the spread of the disease in both Europe and Africa, and concerns about the readiness and capacities of governments to respond. The MOP should make a statement on these issues.

4. The Executive Secretary welcomed Contracting Parties, non-Party Range States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. He was grateful to the Government of Senegal for its tremendous efforts to make the MOP a success. With regard to avian influenza he agreed that this was a rapidly emerging and complex issue and acknowledged concerns in Africa that the region might be much less able than Europe to deal with possible human health impacts. However, it was important to underline that European countries did not have all the answers to the problem.

5. The Executive Secretary noted that the MOP would be followed, in November, by the Conferences of Parties of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species, to be held in Uganda and Kenya respectively. This would provide an excellent opportunity for emphasizing issues of importance to Africa and means of working together to address these.

6. The Chair of the Standing Committee referred to document MOP 3.3 Rev.2 'Provisional Annotated Agenda' and MOP 3.4 Rev.2 'Provisional Work Programme' and invited the Executive Secretary to introduce a number of proposed amendments.

7. The Executive Secretary tabled amendments to both documents, notably the postponement of the Opening Ceremony to 24 October.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

1st Plenary Session (23 October)

8. The Chair of the Standing Committee referred to document MOP 3.2 Rev.1 'Rules of Procedure' and proposed reviewing it page by page.

9. The United Kingdom raised points of clarification relating to the internal consistency of the Rules of Procedure. However, as these were relatively minor issues they could be dealt with via a small drafting group. This proposal, supported by the European Community and Switzerland, was accepted by the Meeting and a group comprised of the European Community, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda and UK was tasked with reviewing the Rules of Procedure and reporting back to plenary as soon as possible. In the meantime, the Rules of Procedure would be applied on a provisional basis.

4th Plenary Session (24 October)

10. The Chair referred to document MOP 3.2 Rev. 2 that had recently been distributed and asked the UK to report on progress made by the small drafting group established on 23 October.

11. The UK summarized the various amendments proposed by the drafting group and shown as tracked changes in the revised document.

12. Switzerland raised concerns over Rule 4.2 and Rule 10, while Mauritius/Chair of the Technical Committee and Tanzania/Chair of the Standing Committee felt that it would be better to retain the original wording of Rule 7.2 rather than introduce the amendment proposed by the drafting group.

13. Discussion did not lead to full consensus on these points and the Chair asked the UK to work further on the document, in collaboration with interested delegations, and to come back to the plenary session with a revised proposal.

14. Germany, speaking as Chair of the Credentials Committee, referred to Rule 18.2 and suggested amendments to facilitate the work of future Credentials Committees at AEWAs MOPs.

7th Plenary Session (27 October)

15. The revised Rules of Procedures (document MOP3.2 Rev.3) were adopted by the Meeting without further amendment.

Agenda item 3. Election of Officers

16. Speaking on behalf of the European Union Member States present, the UK nominated the Republic of Senegal to chair MOP3. This proposal was supported by Syria and adopted by acclamation.

17. Mauritius proposed Germany as Vice-Chair of the MOP. This proposal was supported by Senegal and adopted by acclamation.

18. Assuming his role as Chair, Professor Amadou Tidiane Ba, Director of the Institute of Environmental Sciences and Member of the National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Senegal, thanked delegates for the confidence placed in Senegal.

Agenda item 4. Adoption of Agenda and Work Programme

19. The Executive Secretary recalled the proposed amendments to both the Provisional Annotated Agenda and Provisional Work Programme already tabled under Agenda item 1.

20. Switzerland requested clarification of use of the term ‘Bureau’ in the Provisional Work Programme and also requested that highlights of discussions in the Sessional Committees should be reported back to plenary as a means of assisting one-person delegations unable to attend parallel Sessional Committees.

21. The Executive Secretary clarified that ‘Bureau’ should in fact refer to ‘Meeting Committee’ (as provided for in the Rules of Procedure). The Chairs of Sessional Committees would indeed be asked to report back to plenary.

22. Speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, the UK proposed two minor amendments to the Agenda.

23. The Meeting adopted the Provisional Annotated Agenda and Provisional Work Programme as amended by the proposals tabled by the Executive Secretary and the UK. Revised versions of both documents (MOP 3.3 Rev.3 and MOP 3.4 Rev.3, respectively) were distributed later on 23 October.

Agenda item 5. Establishment of Credentials Committee and Sessional Committees

1st Plenary Session (23 October)

24. The Executive Secretary recalled that a Credentials Committee composed of at least two Contracting Parties from Africa and at least two from Eurasia was required under the Rules of Procedure.

25. The Meeting appointed Congo, Germany, Guinea, Mauritius and Ukraine to serve on the Credentials Committee, each of these Contracting Parties having volunteered to do so.

4th Plenary Session (24 October)

26. The Chair established two Sessional Committees. The first on Financial and Administrative Matters, to be chaired by Germany, being the Vice-Chair of the MOP, and the second on Scientific and Technical Matters to be chaired by the Chair of the Technical Committee. These would meet on the evening of 24 October and report back to plenary.

Agenda item 6. Admission of Observers

27. The Executive Secretary read out the list of non-Party Range States, intergovernmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations and national non-governmental organizations distributed as document MOP 3.5 ‘Admission of Observers’.

28. The Meeting duly agreed to admit all the Observers listed.

Agenda item 7. Opening Statements

29. The Chair recalled that written statements were not to be presented orally, but would be collected by the Secretariat for inclusion in the meeting report. However, non-Party Range States were invited to make brief oral statements, should they wish to do so, on progress towards joining AEWA.

30. Latvia confirmed that the Government of Latvia had adopted the Agreement in August 2005.

31. Switzerland, speaking as the host country of the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, noted that a written statement on behalf of the Convention would be handed to the Secretariat.

32. Algeria reported ratification of the Convention on Migratory Species in March 2005. The same procedure would be followed for AEWA. As soon as the relevant decree was published, ratification documents would be deposited.

33. Burundi stated its intention to become a member of the CMS/AEWA family.

34. Chad referred to its recent ratification of AEWA and stated that the necessary official documentation would soon be transmitted to the Depositary.

35. These statements were greeted by acclamation. The Chair added his welcome to the announcements made and encouraged other non-Party Range States to follow suit.

Agenda item 8. Reports

a) Standing Committee

36. Introducing document MOP 3.6 'Report of the Standing Committee', the Chair of the Standing Committee reported on the Committee's activities during the last triennium. As the Standing Committee had only been established in 2002, this was the first such report to a MOP. At the Committee's first meeting, Tanzania had been elected as Chair, with the Netherlands as Vice-Chair. Two further meetings had been held during the period.

37. The Chair of the Standing Committee closed his presentation by thanking the Government of Senegal for hosting MOP3. He also thanked those who had attended Standing Committee meetings for their input during the triennium, and the Secretariat for ensuring the timely preparation of these meetings.

38. Switzerland expressed concern about the delay in the process of recruitment of the Executive Secretary. Switzerland was very satisfied with the performance of the acting Executive Secretary, and asked the Chair of the Standing Committee to convey this message to the Executive Director of UNEP.

39. France, Germany and the UK echoed Switzerland's satisfaction with the performance of the Executive Secretary.

40. The Chair welcomed Switzerland's proposal.

41. The Chair of the Standing Committee also welcomed Switzerland's intervention. The subject had been discussed frequently, and it was not clear where the problem lay. Moreover, letters had been written to the Executive Director, but no definitive information had been forthcoming. There was no doubt about the Executive Secretary's competence, and he proposed that the Meeting should pass a resolution expressing its grave concern.

42. It was agreed that Switzerland, Germany and any other interested delegations would draft an appropriate resolution for the Meeting's consideration.

43. UNEP informed the Meeting that it regretted the lengthy process, but that UNEP was currently organising interviews to take place before the end of the year. UNEP assumed responsibility for ensuring that the matter was given the highest priority and would be settled before end of 2005.

44. The report of the Standing Committee Chair was adopted.

b) Technical Committee

45. Speaking initially on behalf of Mauritius, the Chair of the Technical Committee (Mr Yousoof Mungroo) thanked the host country for the warm welcome received in Senegal and the Secretariat for preparation of the MOP.

46. The Chair of the Technical Committee presented document MOP 3.7 'Report of the Chair of the AEW Technical Committee to the 3rd Session of the Meeting of the Parties'. During the triennium 2003-2005 three meetings had been held, and many items had been finalized for presentation to the MOP. The Technical Committee had also established several intersessional working groups.

47. The Chair of the Technical Committee thanked the members of the Committee for facilitating his task as Chairman.

48. UNEP/CMS Secretariat noted that the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species would be discussing the Global Registry of Migratory Species (GROMS) at its forthcoming meeting in Nairobi. An assessment had been made, and CMS considered that the database needed improvement, and more time should be allowed for this. UNEP/CMS conceded, however, that it was possibly not suited to AEW's requirements.

49. The report of the Chair of the Technical Committee was adopted.

c) Depositary

50. In the absence of a representative of the Depositary (the Netherlands), the Executive Secretary reported that since the last MOP the number of Contracting Parties had risen from 33 to 52. Document MOP 3.8 'Report of the Depositary' did not reflect the current situation, as it did not include Tunisia, which had become a Party as of 1 July 2005. Many other countries were currently in the process of acceding, and were expected to join soon. The Secretariat was pleased with the progress to date and looked forward to further growth of the Agreement in the near future.

51. On behalf of the EU Member States present, the United Kingdom congratulated the Secretariat on its successful efforts to recruit new Parties.

d) Secretariat

52. The Executive Secretary presented document MOP 3.9 Rev.1 'Report of the Secretariat', which was divided into four sections (General Matters, Information Management, Cooperation with Other Organizations, Technical and Scientific Matters). The report did not cover routine, day-to-day tasks, which nevertheless constituted a large part of the Secretariat's work.

53. On the subject of the imminent move of the Secretariat, and other UN organizations located in Bonn, to the new UN premises, the Executive Secretary expressed his gratitude to the German Government for the accommodation so generously provided.

54. The Executive Secretary introduced AEWA's Technical Officer, Mr Sergey Dereliev, recruited in August 2004, and new Junior Professional Officer, Mr Florian Keil, a position funded by the Government of Germany with a focus on information management. The Secretariat also regularly employed temporary staff members, though the fact that – in line with UN rules – these had to be replaced every six months caused some difficulties.

55. The Secretariat's work on information management had included improving the AEWA website, producing three newsletters and the launch of a monthly electronic newsletter. A second DVD had been produced, as had a new exhibition. The Government of Luxembourg had kindly provided funds to produce public relations material of various kinds.

56. Switzerland enquired about the outcomes of the meeting that had taken place in Chad with financial support from AEWA. Chad reported that the funding had been used for organization of the workshop, for preparation of the meeting report, and to assist with preparation of Chad's instruments of accession to AEWA.

57. Mali felt that the Secretariat's networking with Parties and non-Parties had been a major activity that was not adequately represented in the report.

58. The Executive Secretary emphasized that contact with Parties was one of the routine, everyday tasks not included in the report, but acknowledged the need for continued strengthening of network-building efforts.

Agenda item 9. Report on the Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of AEWA in 2005

59. The Executive Secretary described the various activities organized to mark AEWA's tenth anniversary. These included the development of a new AEWA logo, improvements to the website, and the launch of 'Migratory Waterbird Day', which had been celebrated for the first time in 22 countries in the region. Countries had been provided with funds to print a poster, which had appeared in several languages. It was planned to repeat this event in the coming years, hopefully attracting even more attention.

60. The Secretariat, together with the CMS family, had celebrated the actual anniversary on 16 June 2005, and some weeks later had been honoured when the German Minister of the Environment had opened the AEWA exhibition in Bonn's Museum Koenig. The Secretariat had also distributed copies of a special anniversary brochure. This included contributions from ten people closely associated with the Agreement during its first ten years, and had been produced in English and French versions.

61. The Secretariat's report was adopted.

Agenda item 10. Review of the Implementation of the AEWA International Implementation Priorities 2003-2007

62. The Executive Secretary presented document MOP 3.10 Rev.1 'Report on the Performance of the AEWA International Implementation Priorities Plan 2003–2007'. He was pleased to report that the sum of USD 940,000 – mentioned as having been secured in voluntary contributions – had been exceeded since the document was distributed. Despite the loss of 25% of the purchasing power of the US dollar, the Secretariat had still managed to implement many activities listed in the Plan. The list included only those projects for which funding had been received directly by AEWA.

63. The UK, speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, congratulated the Secretariat on having secured such a large sum for these projects. This had been a substantial piece of work and was greatly to the Secretariat's credit.

64. Switzerland echoed these congratulations, but felt that one project was missing, namely the publication of the results of the African Waterbird Census for 1999–2001. The Executive Secretary apologized for this omission and promised to rectify it. Wetlands International added that this project had been concluded and the results published.

65. The Executive Secretary informed the Meeting of an addition to the Agenda to permit one of the projects in the International Implementation Priorities for the last triennium to be presented.

66. Mr Moussa Séga Diop (CERES-Locustox, Senegal) made a presentation entitled 'Review of the use of agrochemicals in Africa and their impacts on migratory waterbirds'.

67. Thanking Mr Diop, the Chair noted that the presentation had highlighted the correlation between pesticide use and waterbird mortality and that this was an issue to which the Agreement might have to pay more attention.

68. Croatia requested that the presentation be made available to delegates in printed form.

69. Kenya raised the issue of pollution from heavy metals and suggested that a similar study be undertaken on this. The Chair requested the Secretariat to take note of this suggestion for future consideration.

70. The European Community noted that the study clearly linked priority species under AEWA with one of the pressures and threats in Africa, and asked how the recommendations concerning further work on residue analysis were being taken forward. Mr Diop responded that research into this issue was far from complete.

71. Algeria pointed out that agrochemicals are often wrongly portrayed as internationally approved biodegradable substances that are not damaging to nature.

72. The UK noted that the draft list of International Implementation Priorities for the coming triennium would need adjusting in order to take forward the issue of agrochemicals and waterbirds.

Agenda item 11. Report on the Implementation of the African-Eurasian Flyways GEF Projects

73. Mr Ward Hagemeyer, Wetlands International, made a presentation on the UNEP/GEF Flyways Project 'Enhancing the conservation of the critical network of sites required by Migratory Waterbirds on the African/Eurasian Flyways'.

74. He stressed that this was a strategic project, not aiming at actual implementation of field activities, but rather to the building of capacity and catalysing of activities. The goal was to improve the conservation status of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds by conserving the network of key sites used by these species. The project had been under development since 2000 and implementation would begin soon, following the imminent conclusion of contracts between GEF, UNEP and UNOPS. Recruitment of a Chief Technical Adviser was now taking place and a Junior Officer would also be recruited. These two UNOPS positions would constitute the Project Coordination Unit to be hosted by Wetlands International in Wageningen.

75. The main actors in the project were:

- Requesting countries (i.e. those countries where demonstration projects were located)
- Technical agencies (Wetlands International, BirdLife International, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), and local executing agencies)
- UNEP as implementing body and UNOPS as executing body
- Main supported agreements/conventions (AEWA and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands)
- Main funders (GEF, AEWA and the Government of Germany).

76. The main components of the project were:

- Strengthening the scientific basis for conservation activities through development of a comprehensive, flyway-scale critical site network planning and management tool;
- Establishing a basis for strengthened decision-making and technical capacity for conservation of wetlands and migratory waterbirds;
- Enhancing availability and exchange of information through improved conservation capacity and resource provision.

77. Steps were being taken, in conjunction with the requesting countries and the technical agencies, to identify immediate priorities for implementation.

78. In response to a question from Senegal, Wetlands International clarified that ‘executing’ and ‘implementing’ agencies have specific meanings in GEF project terminology. In this case, UNEP was the implementing agency and UNOPS the executing agency. However, technical support would be provided by Wetlands International, BirdLife International and UNEP-WCMC.

79. The European Community considered that the project would provide a strategic opportunity for advancement of AEWA and its Action Plan and was encouraged that implementation of the project was about to begin. However, it would be helpful to know exactly how the results were to be fed into the development of AEWA.

80. Wetlands International stated that the GEF project would contribute to at least 75% of AEWA’s International Implementation Priorities.

81. The Executive Secretary added that by linking the GEF programme with the International Implementation Priorities, a ‘win-win’ situation would be achieved because each mechanism would contribute 50% of the corresponding project costs. Furthermore 50% of the new Junior Professional Officer’s time would be dedicated to the GEF project, including distribution of information about the project.

Agenda item 12. Register of International Projects

82. The Secretariat introduced draft Resolution 3.1 ‘Closure of the Register of International Projects’ established by MOP Resolution 1.5. The rate of submission of projects to the Register had been low, meaning that it was always out of date and did not fulfil its intended purpose. This problem had been discussed by the Technical Committee at its 6th Meeting. The Technical Committee recommended that the Register should be closed, as it would anyway be superseded by the proposed on-line reporting format for AEWA National Reports.

83. The UK proposed the following addition to the first preambular paragraph: “ ...which sought to record those projects where Parties, Range States and other partners were working collaboratively to take forward the objectives of the Agreement”.

Agenda item 13. Official Opening Ceremony
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84. His Excellency Mr Thierno Lo, Minister of the Environment and Nature Protection of the Republic of Senegal, presided over the official opening ceremony for the 3rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds. The ceremony, held during the morning of 24 October, commenced with music and dance.

85. The Executive Secretary of AEWA expressed his pleasure that the Meeting of the Parties was taking place in Senegal and renewed his thanks for the hospitality shown to participants. The issue of avian flu was causing much concern in Africa and he hoped the Meeting would help clarify the issue, which had implications beyond those affecting migratory birds.

86. The newly-appointed UNEP Director of the Division of Environmental Conventions, Mr Bakary Kante, conveyed a message to the Meeting from UNEP's Executive Director, Professor Klaus Töpfer. The Executive Director noted that AEWA was celebrating a landmark anniversary. Migrating birds that crossed political boundaries depended for their survival on the national policies of the countries concerned. With regard to avian flu, the new CMS International Task Force on Avian Influenza, of which AEWA was a member, had warned that several bird species could be wiped out by the disease, and that there was a potential risk of a human pandemic through further mutation of the virus. Prevention would depend on taking action on the basis of the best information available. The Task Force was preparing a press release that would be distributed to the Meeting. With regard to the future of AEWA, the Executive Director asked the Parties to view the proposed budget increase favourably, as the work of the Secretariat depended on its having sufficient funds. UNEP had provided USD 25,000 to AEWA to support the participation in the MOP of delegates from least developed countries, and was looking at additional ways to strengthen UNEP/AEWA cooperation, especially in the fields of outreach and awareness-raising. UNEP wished to express its full support for AEWA and assured the Meeting that it would make every effort to strengthen cooperation with AEWA and the wider CMS family in the years to come.

Agenda item 14. AEWA Award Presentation Ceremony

87. The Executive Secretary announced that the AEWA Award was being presented to mark the tenth anniversary of the Agreement, but should continue to be awarded at each subsequent MOP. The winners had been chosen, by the Standing Committee, on the basis of nominations received. In the individual category the award was made to Mr David Stroud (UK) in acknowledgement of his invaluable and unstinting work for AEWA and many other international and national bodies concerned with waterbird and wetland conservation.

88. Mr Stroud thanked AEWA saying that he was both honoured and surprised. He pledged that the financial element of the prize (USD 5,000) would be used to support African waterbird conservation. He reminded the Meeting that wetlands were in continuing and accelerating decline, more so than other ecosystems, and that this had serious consequences for waterbirds. He highlighted AEWA's role in encouraging further progress in three key areas: monitoring and reporting to ensure the availability of clear status and trends data for migratory waterbird populations; setting strategic waterbird conservation priorities with a sharp focus; and continuing to work across national boundaries.

89. In the institutional category, the AEWA Award was presented to the Government of the Netherlands, and, in particular, to the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the driving force behind the establishment of AEWA and a strong supporter of the Agreement during its first ten years. Accepting the award, Mr Chris Kalden, Secretary General of the Ministry, said that the mystery of bird migration taught respect for nature, but that much work was needed to secure the future for migratory species. He urged AEWA to give greater attention to the economic and cultural values of migratory waterbirds, and believed that the central task was to involve stakeholders at all levels, but particularly at local, field level. He announced that the Netherlands would multiply the USD 5,000

prize money by ten to provide a USD 50,000 grant to be used for waterbird conservation projects in Senegal and Cape Verde. Both of these projects had a strong community focus and symbolic presentations were made to representatives of the two initiatives: the President of the Women's Federation, Senegal, and the Director of the Wetlands International Office for West Africa.

90. The Executive Secretary announced that the Standing Committee had decided to appoint Dr Gerard C. Boere as Honorary Patron of AEWA in recognition of his status as the 'father' of the Agreement. As Dr Boere was unable to be present, his message of thanks – and assurance that he would continue to support the work of AEWA at every opportunity – was conveyed to the Meeting by the Chair of the Standing Committee.

91. Following a musical interlude, the Secretariat screened the new AEWA DVD, which included sequences shot in the Wadden Sea and in wetland areas of Senegal.

92. The Minister of Environment and Nature Protection welcomed participants on behalf of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, and the Government and people of Senegal. He thanked the Netherlands for the support given to implement environmental policy in Senegal, and was pleased that his country's efforts were being recognized internationally. Senegal was of great importance for migratory waterbirds and had a long tradition of protected areas. Wetlands were increasingly endangered, and the country was developing a national wetlands policy to meet this challenge. The network of Marine Protected Areas, created under the auspices of the President of the Republic, also played an essential role in protecting species. Migratory waterbirds symbolized the cooperation required between countries. The avian flu issue required special attention, and the Government of Senegal would endorse any measures decided upon at this meeting. He declared the Meeting officially open.

93. As representative of the environment component of NEPAD under the auspices of the Government of Senegal, the Minister signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the CMS Deputy Executive Secretary, Mr. Moulay Lahcen El Kabiri, on the newly established Coordination Mechanism for the Memorandum of Understanding on Measures to Conserve the Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa.

Agenda item 15. Avian Influenza

94. Mr Ward Hagemeyer, Wetlands International, made a presentation briefly summarizing the current state of scientific knowledge on avian influenza. The main points are presented below in paragraphs 95-104.

95. The virus causing avian influenza is H5N1, a type A influenza virus. This occurs in two forms: low pathogenic, which is endemic in many waterbirds and is not generally fatal; and highly pathogenic, which kills birds in quite large numbers. The latter affects mainly poultry but the virus has spread to wild birds, which can transport it along migratory flyways. The low pathogenic strain can mutate to the highly pathogenic strain, especially where birds occur in high concentrations, e.g. poultry farms. There is also concern about risks to humans. The World Health Organization states that there is currently no risk to the general public and no risk from consumption of well-processed food. However, there is a potential risk if the virus mutates. The risk of a human pandemic was currently assessed as fairly low. It is important to distinguish between the current levels of risk to poultry/wild birds (high) and to people (relatively low).

96. The virus is spread via:

- transport of poultry/products
- legal/illegal trade/transport of wild birds

- migration of wild birds
- transport of poultry faeces
- intake of water contaminated with faeces
- intake of air from infected farms

97. The spread of H5N1 via migratory wild birds may be direct or indirect. It is important to know exactly how birds move from site to site and to quantify the risk associated with these movements.

98. The potential for the virus to become widespread was illustrated using examples of flyway intersections. The virus had not yet been found in Africa or South Asia, but its arrival in due course could be expected.

99. The potential impacts of avian influenza include:

- economic impacts on the poultry sector
- social and emotional impacts
- human health impacts
- impacts on livelihoods
- impacts on wild bird populations.

100. Waterbird species thought to be at particular risk of serious impacts on their populations include: Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*), Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*), Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*), Oriental Stork (*Ciconia boyciana*) and Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*).

101. In response to these potential impacts, an international Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza had been set up under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species. The CMS Task Force had underlined that there was currently insufficient understanding of the behaviour of the virus in waterbird populations, in aquatic habitats or in different climatic zones. There were also key questions with regard to the likelihood of transmission, the nature and timing of migratory routes at site-use level, and ways and means of advising on farming practices to reduce risks.

102. Nevertheless, risk reduction measures might include steps to:

- Regulate animal markets
- Set up surveillance for prevalence of the virus in wild birds
- Implement a precautionary suspension of global wild bird trade
- Improve standards for poultry farming and marketing practices
- Improve control of vaccines
- Better identify migratory routes
- Avoid counter-productive measures such as culling or destruction of habitats.

103. These all required both international and national preparedness.

104. As a member of the International Task Force, AEWA could play a key role in communicating accurate information and making it widely accessible. A press release had been distributed to the Meeting and delegates were also referred to the websites of Wetlands International and FAO for further information.

105. The European Community thanked Wetlands International for its excellent work on a very sensitive dossier and valuable scientific input to the overall debate. Avian influenza had serious implications in terms of human health, economic matters and nature conservation. The EC had taken initiatives to increase surveillance and guidance with regard to virology and ornithology. Other steps had included increased biosecurity to reduce contact between poultry and wild birds in areas

considered at high risk. An informed, scientifically founded debate was required and expert information from Wetlands International and others would be critical. This was why the EC was financially supporting an assessment of available data. It was also important that countries ensured close coordination between the authorities dealing with ornithology and those dealing with virology/veterinary matters. There was clearly an important role for AEWa and CMS.

106. The UK, on behalf of the EU Member States present, considered it would be useful for the MOP to reflect on the points contained in the presentation and to set out the role of AEWa in a draft Resolution.

107. France supported this proposal.

108. Many African delegations, including Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia and the IUCN Regional Office for West Africa highlighted points of special concern to Africa. In particular, the difficulty of responding to the challenges posed by avian influenza given the region's limited resources and the significant gaps in information and awareness among decision makers and the wider public.

109. It was agreed that innovative and collaborative approaches were required to ensure that the international community supported national and regional efforts to tackle the problem. This should start from an assessment of the risks and the actions needed.

110. The Chair requested the MOP3 Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters to take up the UK's proposal and to prepare a draft Resolution.

Agenda item 16: Scientific and Technical Issues

a) Guidance on the term 'long-term decline'

111. The Chair of the Technical Committee introduced document MOP 3.11 'Proposal for guidance on the definition of the term *significant long-term decline* of waterbird populations'. He noted that in response to the request from MOP2 to develop such guidance, the Technical Committee had established a working group chaired by Mr David Stroud, UK. At its 6th meeting, the Technical Committee had agreed on the proposal contained in MOP 3.11.

112. Mr Stroud reported on the working group's deliberations. The definition proposed was: "a significant long-term decline is one where the best available data, information or assessments indicate that it has declined by at least 25% in numbers or range over a period of 25 years or 7.5 generations". The guidance for applying the definition included the following points:

- Any definition will always need to be applied with best expert knowledge;
- Where trends differ between countries, the applied rate should cover at least half of the countries in a species' range;
- Where data are not available, periods of less than 25 years may be used, but should not normally be less than 9 years;
- Where populations are very small, judgements should be made on a precautionary basis.

113. In response to a question from Kenya, Mr Stroud confirmed the working group's recognition of the importance of information on habitat quality as a factor contributing to population declines and underlined the group's recommendation that qualitative as well as quantitative data should be used in assessing declines.

114. France welcomed the excellent work done by the Technical Committee but suggested that all available data be taken into account; not only those from the last 25 years. France also considered a period of 9 years to be too short in the case of species with naturally fluctuating populations. Finally, when a possible decline was identified on a quantitative basis, those familiar with the field situation should be asked to contribute before any decision to place the species on an Annex.

115. Germany noted that it would bring forward minor amendments to the relevant MOP3 Sessional Committee.

116 The Chair requested that the MOP3 Sessional Committee also give consideration to the points made by France.

b) Clarification of the procedures used to delimit biogeographical populations of waterbirds

117. The Chair of the Technical Committee introduced document MOP 3.12 'Proposal for guidance on the definition of biogeographical populations of waterbirds'. The Technical Committee had set up a working group under the Chairmanship of Mr David Stroud, UK. Based on the working group's findings, MOP 3.12 had been approved by the 6th meeting of the Technical Committee for forwarding to the MOP for consideration with draft Resolution 3.2.

118. Mr Stroud presented the main conclusions of the working group's review.

119. The Chair of the Technical Committee noted that the second preambular paragraph of Resolution 3.2 should refer to MOP 3.12, not MOP 3.10.

120. The EC noted that the role of Wetlands International could be more clearly expressed in draft Resolution 3.2.

121. France acknowledged the high quality of work done by the working group but suggested that Resolution 3.2 be amended to give priority to genetic studies of populations and the application of such studies to defining biogeographic populations.

122. Switzerland drew attention to the possible financial implications of Resolution 3.2, which requested additional work from Wetlands International. Such work would require funding.

123. The Chair requested that these observations and proposals be taken forward to the MOP3 Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters.

c) Developing Guidelines for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan

124. The Secretariat introduced draft Resolution 3.3 'Developing Guidelines for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan'. This suggested that in the next triennium the Technical Committee should work on the development of such guidelines and submit them for adoption to MOP4.

125. The UK proposed adding the following new operative paragraph: "Further calls upon the Technical Committee to review the guidance agreed at MOP3 for 'long-term decline' in light of its practical application and to report on its appropriateness to future MOPs".

126. The Chair asked the MOP3 Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters to consider this proposal.

Agenda item 17: Implementation of the Agreement and Action Plan

a) Synthesis of National Reports

127. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.13 'Preliminary Synthesis of information provided by AEWA Parties through National Reports on implementation of the Agreement for the triennium 2003-2005', drawing attention to the low submission rate of National Reports (23 from Contracting Parties as of 30 September 2005) and the consequently provisional nature of the analysis contained in that document. Implementation achievements and future priorities were briefly summarized.

b) Reports on the phasing out of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

128. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.14 'Preliminary synthesis of information provided by AEWA Parties on phasing out of lead shot use in wetlands'. Only 14 reports had been submitted by Contracting Parties as of 30 September 2005, less than one-third of the total due, with one additional report from a Signatory. This made the synthesis highly provisional.

c) Request for submission of missing National Reports

129. The Secretariat introduced draft Resolution 3.4, which underlined the importance of national reports and urged all Contracting Parties that had not yet done so to submit such reports by the end of 2005.

130. The Chair agreed that the information available so far could serve to indicate some general trends, but the interpretation was severely limited by the low number of reports received. He supported the call for all outstanding reports to be submitted by 31 December 2005.

131. Following a request from the UK speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, the Chair agreed that any additional comments would be taken up in later Plenary Sessions.

Agenda item 18. Proposals for Monitoring of the Implementation of the Agreement and Action Plan

a) Proposal for an online format for National Reports

132. The Executive Secretary introduced draft Resolution 3.5 'Development of an online National Report Format'. It had been intended that this would be introduced by UNEP/WCMC, but prior commitments had prevented this. The issue had been discussed several times by the Standing Committee and Technical Committee. The intention was to make drafting of National Reports easier for Contracting Parties, based on experience under the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on Marine Turtles, which makes it possible for Parties to use a password to upload information on national activities via the internet. The plan was to do the same for AEWA in such a way that Parties could merge the information into their overall reports to CMS. The Secretariats in the CMS family were working closely together to develop a harmonized online tool. The MOP3 Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters could discuss whether to recommend introduction of the online reporting format for AEWA at MOP4, or whether it would be desirable to do it earlier.

133. The UK, on behalf of the EU Member States present, strongly supported draft Resolution 3.5, noting that much of the work was being pursued under the aegis of the UNEP Director of Environmental Conventions. The following addition to the first operative paragraph of draft Resolution 3.5 was proposed: "The format should seek to advance harmonization of reporting with other international biodiversity agreements through the development of common reporting modules".

134. During discussion, with contributions from Tanzania/Chair of the Standing Committee, the UK, UNEP/CMS and the Executive Secretary, it was recognized that it would be important to build the new system gradually, though keeping in mind the long-term goal expressed in the UK's proposed amendment. This would enable those Parties facing the greatest resource constraints to adapt to the new online format.

135. Switzerland fully supported the proposal of the UK and suggested adding to the operative paragraphs of draft Resolution 3.5: "...taking into account the results of the analysis of the difficulties encountered by certain Contracting Parties in delivering their National Reports (draft Resolution 3.4)" and adding a third operative paragraph to draft Resolution 3.4: "*Instructs* the Secretariat to analyse the difficulties encountered by certain Contracting Parties in delivering their National Reports and to make the results of this analysis available to the Standing Committee before MOP4".

136. The Chair ruled that draft Resolution 3.5 was approved, subject to inclusion of these friendly amendments, to be forwarded for formal adoption later in the Meeting.

b) Proposal to draft international reviews for MOP4

137. The AEWA Executive Secretary referred to document MOP 3.15 'Overview of International Reviews necessary for the implementation of the Agreement to be submitted to MOP4 in 2008'. Paragraph 4 of the AEWA Action Plan required that a number of International Reviews be produced before MOP4. One of these, the Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbird Species in the AEWA Region (document Inf. 3.1), was now available, but others had yet to be produced due to resource constraints.

138. Both the Technical Committee and Standing Committee had stressed the essential nature of these reports, and if the Contracting Parties were of the same opinion, additional resources would be required.

139. The UK, speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, underlined that these reviews were mandatory under the Agreement. They provided the basis for assessing the performance of the Agreement and setting future priorities, particularly in view of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) target to significantly reduce biodiversity loss by 2010. The Secretariat's resource constraints had been recognized, and it was up to the Parties to find a solution in the coming budget discussion.

140. Switzerland agreed with this view, and added that, if possible, the work should be contracted-out before 2007/2008 so as to enable the reports to be assessed by the Technical Committee prior to MOP4.

Agenda item 19. Development of an International Partnership for Waterbird Population Assessments

141. Mr David Stroud, UK, speaking on behalf of the Technical Committee, referred to draft Resolution 3.6. 'Developing an international partnership for support of waterbird population assessments'. This resolution proposed developing a funding partnership for a range of outputs being produced by Wetlands International, and would provide a much better understanding of waterbird populations. The resolution reflected the value of the International Waterbird Census (IWC), but recognized its chronic under-funding to date and the consequent implications this had for AEWA. This situation required a collaborative approach to putting the key policy-relevant outputs of the IWC onto a sound financial footing.

142. The UK supported the resolution on behalf of the EU Member States present. The European Community, while agreeing that future funding of this work was an issue requiring attention, noted that it was not in a position to make a long-term commitment at the present MOP. Nevertheless, the EC was keen to explore possible mechanisms with the Executive Secretary.

143. There being no further comments, the Chair ruled that the draft Resolution was approved to be forwarded for formal adoption later in the Meeting.

Agenda item 20. Follow-up to the Global Flyway Conference and Climate Change and Waterbirds
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144. The UK introduced draft Resolution 3.7 'Implementing the conclusions of the *Waterbirds Around the World* Conference'. The Edinburgh Declaration was appended to Resolution 3.7 and a summary booklet about the conference had been circulated to MOP3 participants. The conference recognized that, while progress has been made in waterbird conservation, many species and habitats remained at risk and required urgent action.

145. There being no comments from the floor, the Chair ruled that Resolution 3.7 was approved to go forward for adoption later in the Meeting.

146. The UK introduced draft Resolution 3.17 'Climate change and migratory waterbirds'. Various scientific reports had predicted climate change effects with potentially severe impacts on migratory waterbirds; for example, extreme warming in the Arctic and decreased rainfall in the Mediterranean basin. However, relatively few reviews had been conducted of the possible impacts of climate change on biodiversity. The UK had commissioned a recent review that showed more than 80% of species covered by CMS as being under threat from climate change impacts. Changes in distributions of migratory species were already occurring and barriers to migration had become more severe. Arctic and montane species were especially vulnerable. The AEWAs Agreement text itself included no explicit reference to climate change issues, but it would be timely for the MOP to consider these and the responses that might be needed. The aim of draft Resolution 3.17 was therefore to initiate such consideration.

147. The Executive Secretary pointed out that certain tasks laid down for the Secretariat in draft Resolution 3.17 could have financial implications and asked that these be taken into account by the MOP3 Sessional Committee that would be discussing this text.

148. Switzerland raised concerns about the clarity of some parts of the text and considered that significant revision was required, particularly in relation to the resource implications raised by the Executive Secretary.

149. The Chair asked that these points be kept in mind by the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters.

150. The UK assured the Meeting that the UK would itself take on much of the envisaged work, in support of the Agreement and in conformity with the importance that the UK Government attached to climate change. Such support would cover both scientific and advocacy issues.

151. Welcoming this assurance, the Chair of the Standing Committee nevertheless stressed that climate change also affected countries without the means to undertake collaborative research.

152. In response to a question from Kenya, the Executive Secretary underlined that the Secretariat could only undertake work to the extent that the necessary resources were made available.

Agenda item 21. Proposal for Amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement

153. Introducing this Agenda item, Mr Preben Clausen, speaking on behalf of the Technical Committee, recalled that at MOP2 discussion had arisen concerning possible amendments to Table 1 of the Agreement. These potential amendments related to two populations of Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, one population of Pintail *Anas acuta* and one population of Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*. MOP2 had agreed that there were some doubts about the status of these populations and that the lack of definition of 'long-term decline' posed a difficulty. Background information on the present status of these populations was contained in document MOP 3.31 'Status review of four populations of three duck species (Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*, Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* and Pintail *Anas acuta*)'. Trends analysis data had been provided by Wetlands International, in line with the decision of the Technical Committee to use a 25-year run of data for such analyses. From the trends analysis for Mallard and Pintail the Technical Committee had concluded as follows:

- Mallard – Northwest European population: no long-term decline could be observed.
- Mallard – Northern Europe West Mediterranean population: there was no conclusive evidence for a long-term decline, but the situation was 'borderline' and should be kept under review.
- Pintail – Northwest European population: no long-term decline could be observed.

154. Therefore, the Technical Committee had determined that the two Mallard populations should remain in column C category 1 in Table 1 of the Agreement. The Pintail population should remain in column B of Table 1.

155. With regard to the Common Eider Baltic and Wadden Sea population, Mr Clausen, referred to document Inf. 3.11 'Status of the Baltic/Wadden Sea population of Common Eider (*Somateria m. mollissima*)'. The available data showed a recent increase in mortality in all age groups and reduced breeding success in Finland. The Technical Committee recommended that, pending the development and adoption of formal guidance called for in draft Resolution 3.3 'Developing guidelines for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWa Action Plan', a precautionary approach should be adopted and the population moved from column C category 1 to column B category 2d.

156. The Vice-Chair requested the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters to take up further discussion of the issues raised.

157. Referring to documents MOP 3.16 'Proposal for New Species to be added to AEWa Annex 2', MOP 3.29 Rev.2 'Proposal for amendment of the Action Plan of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)', draft Resolution 3.8 'Amendment to the Annexes to the Agreement', and Inf. 3.1 'Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area', the Executive Secretary summarized the situation with regard to proposed amendments to Annexes 2 and 3 of the Agreement. Unfortunately, the process followed in preparing these documents for submission to MOP3 had not been in conformity with Article X of the Agreement, which stipulated that any proposed amendments to the Agreement or its Annexes could only be submitted by a Contracting Party and had to be circulated to Contracting Parties at least 150 days in advance of a MOP. The Secretariat took full responsibility for this oversight. The Depositary had advised that the provisions of Article X took precedence over any draft resolution on such matters. It was up to the MOP to determine whether it nevertheless wished to discuss the proposed amendments, taking into account the time and resources devoted to preparing the documents tabled.

158. The UK, speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, considered that the AEWa Parties shared the responsibility of applying the Agreement's provisions. The matters raised by the Executive Secretary were indeed worthy of discussion by the MOP, but the EU wished to raise a number of general points that should also be taken into account. The Agreement had done well in

developing its Contracting Party base thus far, but 2010 was approaching and now was the time for the Agreement to direct efforts towards implementation in pursuit of the WSSD biodiversity target. Taxonomic expansion of the Agreement at this stage, especially into the marine environment, could result in dilution of AEWA's core focus on waterbirds, and the EU suggested that it was not appropriate to be adding new species at this time. Much remained to be done to deliver on the core conservation priorities already contained in the Agreement's Action Plan. The emphasis should be on strengthening delivery, especially in the African region, taking into account that conservation status is deteriorating for more populations than those for which it is improving, by a ratio of almost 2:1. The question of AEWA's future focus could best be dealt with in the context of the proposed development of an AEWA Strategic Plan. Engaging with seabird conservation would be a departure for the Agreement, and the EU questioned whether the Agreement had the resources to deal with a range of entirely new stakeholders and legal frameworks and to spread itself even more thinly. Article X provided a clear timeframe for proposed amendments to the Agreement or its Annexes and departing from this could set an unfortunate precedent. Finally, the UK highlighted additional EU concerns relating to specific proposed amendments to the Action Plan and to Table 1 of the Action Plan.

159. Switzerland agreed that it was important to stick to the text of the Agreement, while being as flexible as possible in order to take the decisions needed to ensure the best conservation outcomes. As a member of the Technical Committee, Switzerland also recognized that it should have advised the Parties it represented in the Committee that this issue had arisen. Finally, Switzerland welcomed the chance to discuss in the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters the detailed points raised by the UK on behalf of the EU Member States present.

160. The European Community supported the concerns raised by the UK on behalf of the EU Member States. There were very substantial issues at stake and it could not be emphasized strongly enough that the extremely short timeframe for consideration of the relevant documents made it very difficult, if not impossible, to reach a position on the proposals, some of which would have legal implications within the EU if adopted. It was important to ensure that preparatory procedures worked properly for future MOPs, especially with regard to the role of subsidiary bodies. The EC had some proposed amendments to draft Resolution 3.8 and would bring these forward to the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters.

161. The Executive Secretary assured the Meeting that the '150 days' provision of Article X would be respected.

162. The Vice-Chair asked the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters to take up discussion of the points raised by the UK/EU, Switzerland, EC and Executive Secretary.

Agenda item 22. Proposal for the Development of a Strategic Plan for the Agreement

163. The Secretariat introduced draft Resolution 3.9 'Development of a Strategic Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Waterbirds' and document Inf. 3.2 'Draft Strategic Plan for CMS'. At the forthcoming CMS COP, a draft Strategic Plan for CMS would be under consideration. If adopted, it was proposed that the CMS Strategic Plan should be used as the basis for developing an AEWA Strategic Plan to be submitted for formal adoption at MOP4.

164. The Vice-Chair requested the Sessional Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters to take up this issue.

Agenda item 23. Draft Communication Strategy for the Agreement

165. The Secretariat briefly introduced document MOP 3.17 ‘Development of a Communication Strategy’ and draft Resolution 3.10 ‘Communication Strategy for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)’. The process of developing a Communication Strategy had been started two years earlier with funds from the UK. Progress had been monitored by both the Technical Committee and Standing Committee, and the latter had approved the draft Strategy for forwarding to the MOP.

166. Ms Gwen van Boven, Consultant to the Secretariat, reported that the document was the result of a long consultative process involving Range States and many partners. The Strategy was intended for active use by the Contracting Parties and Secretariat to improve their communications work. Its overall aim was for “*the AEWA Secretariat to initiate, facilitate and to support communication through improved cooperation between its formal bodies and its Contracting Parties in their efforts to implement the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement*”.

167. The objectives of the Strategy were to:

- Stimulate and increase effective internal communication
- Strengthen and develop mechanisms for effective external communication
- Build regional capacity for communication
- Increase knowledge-sharing

168. The Strategy foresaw monitoring/review procedures at different levels, including annual reports, a mid-term review and a final review to be submitted to the Standing Committee. Finally, the draft Strategy also contained a budget proposal, funding strategy and a four-year action plan for its implementation.

169. Madagascar entirely subscribed to the Communication Strategy but had three proposals:

- (i) more attention should be given to promotion of external communication between the Secretariat and non-Party Range States
- (ii) special emphasis should be placed on communications in the African region
- (iii) cooperation with, and support from, the private sector should be strengthened with regard to communications activities, e.g. through sponsorship.

170. Mali supported Madagascar’s view.

171. The UK, speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, indicated that the EU coordination meetings had not yet had time to consider this issue.

172. Kenya conveyed its strong support for the draft Communication Strategy but suggested that the potential benefits of greater communications linkages within the CMS family should be further explored. Kenya also supported Madagascar’s point that AEWA was relatively well known at national and global levels, but hardly known at all at local level. The Communication Strategy should be very clear on ways and means of communicating with community stakeholders.

173. The Executive Secretary reported that some discussion had already taken place with CMS, which did not yet have its own Communication Strategy. Further discussions would be held on this issue.

174. UNEP/CMS Secretariat agreed that a clear link with the CMS family should be added to the draft Strategy; such harmonization would be very helpful.

175. The Vice-Chair asked that all these points be taken up by the Sessional Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters.

Agenda item 24. Draft International Implementation Priorities (IIPs) 2006-2008

176. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.18 'Draft AEWA International Implementation Priorities for 2006-2008' and draft Resolution 3.11 'AEWA International Implementation Priorities for 2006-2008'. The list of IIPs had been established to assist donors and stakeholders in supporting implementation of the AEWA Action Plan. The list had last been modified by MOP2. Document MOP 3.18 contained revisions based on wide consultation and approved by the Technical Committee for forwarding to the MOP. Draft Resolution 3.11 called for adoption of the IIPs for the next triennium as contained in MOP 3.18, along with measures to support ongoing implementation and review of the IIPs.

177. There being no comments from the floor, the Vice-Chair asked the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters to take up discussion of the documents tabled by the Secretariat.

Agenda item 25. Draft International Single Species Action Plans

178. The Secretariat introduced documents MOP 3.19, 3.20, 3.21, 3.22 and 3.23 and draft Resolution 3.12 'Adoption and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans'. Five draft Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) had been submitted for consideration by the MOP:

a) Light-bellied Brent Goose, East Canadian High Arctic population – *Branta bernicla hrota*

179. This SSAP was contained in document MOP 3.19 and had been compiled by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, UK. The final draft had been reviewed by experts, relevant Range States and the Technical Committee, and approved by the Standing Committee for submission to the MOP.

b) Northern Bald Ibis – *Geronticus eremita*

180. This SSAP was contained in MOP 3.20 and covered the global range of this Critically Endangered species. The Action Plan had been compiled mainly by SEO, the BirdLife Partner in Spain, with other expert input. The final draft had been reviewed by experts, relevant Range States, the Technical Committee, and approved by the Standing Committee for submission to the MOP.

c) Ferruginous Duck – *Aythya nyroca*

181. This SSAP, contained in document MOP 3.21, had been a joint initiative of AEWA and CMS, covered the species' global range and had been compiled by BirdLife International. The final draft had been reviewed by experts, relevant Range States, the Technical Committee, and approved by the Standing Committee for submission to the MOP.

d) White-headed Duck – *Oxyura leucocephala*

182. This SSAP, contained in document MOP 3.22, had been a joint initiative of the European Commission AEWA and CMS, covered this Endangered species' global range and had been compiled by BirdLife International. The final draft had been reviewed by experts, relevant Range States, the Technical Committee, and approved by the Standing Committee for submission to the MOP. At EU level, the plan had been agreed by the Ornithological Committee.

e) Corncrake – *Crex crex*

183. This SSAP, contained in document MOP 3.23, had been a joint initiative of the European Commission, AEWa and CMS, covered the species' global range and had been compiled by BirdLife International. The final draft had been reviewed by experts, relevant Range States, the Technical Committee and approved by the Standing Committee for submission to the MOP. At EU level, the plan had been agreed by the Ornithological Committee.

184. Draft Resolution 3.12 provided for the adoption of the five SSAPs and urged Contracting Parties to implement both these Action Plans and the three SSAPs previously adopted by the MOP.

185. Two more SSAPs were in the pipeline, namely an update of the SSAP for Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) and a new SSAP for Maccoa Duck (*Oxyura maccoa*). It was intended that the final drafts would be circulated during 2006. Draft Resolution 3.12 proposed mandating the Standing Committee to adopt these, and other future SSAPs, intersessionally, on behalf of the MOP.

186. The Vice-Chair asked the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters to take up a proposal from Denmark for a technical amendment to the SSAP for Corncrake.

187. Syria reported that it had begun to implement measures for the conservation of Northern Bald Ibis, including designation of the species' main site as a specially protected area, the development of monitoring (including a cooperative initiative to implement satellite tracking), the cessation of hunting at the site, and public awareness activities at national and local levels. In general, the SSAP seemed to be based on 2002 data, but there had been some improvements in the situation since then and certain amendments were therefore needed. Syria would submit proposed amendments to the Secretariat, recommending that in the coming years efforts should be focused on satellite tracking and encouraging the local community to join in site monitoring and protection work.

188. Morocco considered it was the Range State to which the SSAP for Northern Bald Ibis was most relevant, and would also submit written observations to the Secretariat.

189. France referred to some minor errors in the SSAP for Corncrake and indicated that these would be raised in the Sessional Committee. The species was fully protected in France.

190. The UK, speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, had a few comments to make on the draft Resolution; these would be introduced in the Sessional Committee and related to consistency with previous MOP decisions.

191. Kenya enquired how long it would take for the SSAP for Maccoa Duck to be finalized, urging speedy completion given that the species' status was deteriorating rapidly.

192. The Secretariat reported that the final draft of the SSAP for Maccoa Duck had recently been received and would be circulated as soon as possible. The SSAP could be endorsed intersessionally by the Standing Committee, if so desired by the MOP, through adoption of draft Resolution 3.12. Otherwise, endorsement would have to wait until MOP4.

Agenda item 26. Institutional Arrangements

a) Headquarters Agreement and Juridical Personality

193. Germany reported that the Headquarters Agreement had been signed by the Government of Germany, CMS and the UN in 2002 and entered into force in June 2004 when all signatories signalled that the necessary formal procedures had been completed. Twelve UN institutions with 600

staff were now based in Bonn. In 2003 the German Government had decided that the former parliamentary buildings in Bonn would be handed over to the UN in April 2006 and would thenceforth be known as the 'UN Campus'. The AEWAs Secretariat would also be moving to the new premises. Two key Ministries for AEWAs (Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, and Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development) were still located in Bonn, close to the Campus.

b) Standing Committee

194. The Secretariat recalled that the Standing Committee and its current composition had been established at MOP2 through Resolution 2.6. The term of office of current members was due to end at MOP4, but if any members wished to step down in the meantime there would have to be an interim election.

c) Technical Committee

(i) Institutional Arrangements

195. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.24 'Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee'. This contained suggested amendments to the *modus operandi* of the Technical Committee, notably to the regional divisions of the Agreement Area for Technical Committee purposes, as well as to the Rules of Procedure relating to meetings of the Committee. Appendix 1 of MOP 3.24 defined the proposed new divisions of the Agreement Area, while Appendix 2 listed regional representatives and alternates, with their corresponding terms of office. Appendix 3 set out the proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Technical Committee. Draft Resolution 3.13 'Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee' provided for the adoption of the proposed amendments.

196. The UK, speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, appreciated the proposals made, but had concerns about the proposed 'political' division of Europe, which appeared to set an undesirable precedent. It suggested that the division of Europe should be on a geographical basis as for the other regions in the Agreement Area. Other points would be drawn to the attention of the Sessional Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters.

197. Morocco reported that the North African Technical Committee Alternate representative had retired, resulting in an additional vacancy.

198. Chad pointed out that it should be listed in Central Africa rather than in West Africa.

199. CIC indicated that it had submitted a proposed amendment in writing to the Secretariat.

200. The Executive Secretary asked that nominations to fill vacancies for regional representatives and alternates should be made to the Secretariat. A decision regarding the European regions would be postponed, pending resolution of the point raised by the UK/EU, to be dealt with in the relevant Sessional Committee.

(ii) Proposal to reduce costs related to Technical Committee meetings

201. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.25 'Proposal to reduce costs linked to meetings of the Technical Committee'. This proposed reducing the number of Technical Committee meetings from three to two per triennium and restricting the financial support available to delegates. These two measures would together save some USD 40,000 during the period 2006-2008.

d) Cooperation with other bodies and processes

202. The Secretariat reported that AEWA had concluded, together with CMS, a Joint Work Programme with Wetlands International and another with the Ramsar Convention, both of which were tabled as information documents (Inf. 3.3 and 3.4, respectively). The possibility of developing synergies with UNCCD was also being explored. Similarly AEWA hoped to draft a Memorandum of Cooperation with OMPO, which was active in promoting the implementation of the Agreement in West Africa and Eastern Europe.

Agenda item 27. Financial and administrative matters

a) Income and expenditure 2003-2005

203. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.26 'Report on Income and Expenditure 2003-2005. USD 1.4 million had been received for the core budget from Contracting Party membership contributions, with only USD 140,000 still outstanding. The income from new Parties had been some USD 60,000 less than expected, due to a slower-than-predicted rate of new accessions. Voluntary contributions of USD 934,679 had been received and these were greatly appreciated.

204. Regarding expenditure, salary costs were considerably higher than foreseen in the budget due to dollar exchange-rate losses. Costs related to meetings and travel had been reduced, mainly by securing additional voluntary contributions.

205. For the triennium as a whole, there was a projected excess of expenditure over income of USD 168,000. The reserve had been reduced to USD 150,000 to cover this deficit.

b) Proposal for determining priorities for financial support by AEWA

206. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.27 'Guidelines for determining priorities for AEWA financial support', which had been prepared by the Technical Committee.

207. At the 7th plenary session the revised 'Guidelines for determining priorities for AEWA Financial Support' (document MOP 3.27 Rev.1 Corr.1) were adopted by the Meeting without further Amendment.

c) Draft Budget proposal 2006-2008

208. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.28 'Draft budget proposal for 2006-2008' and the associated draft Resolution 3.14 'Financial and Administrative Matters'.

209. Due to a loss of 20-25% of the purchasing power of the US dollar, the draft budget foresaw increased financial contributions from Parties but no significant increase in activities. The draft budget did not cover implementation of the Communication Strategy or following up on the proposed draft Resolutions dealing with avian flu and climate change issues.

d) Private sector fundraising for the UNEP/CMS family

210. The Secretariat introduced document MOP 3.30 'Private sector fundraising for the UNEP/CMS family'.

211. The UNEP/CMS Secretariat, as the lead body on this matter, reported that a fundraising strategy had been adopted at the last CMS Standing Committee meeting and that an association, 'Friends of CMS', established under German law and in full conformity with UN procedures, was about to be inaugurated to take this matter forward. It was intended to implement concrete projects in cooperation with AEWA, EUROBATS and ASCOBANS.

212. There being no comments from the floor, the Vice-Chair asked the Sessional Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters to take up discussion of the documents tabled by the Secretariat.

Agenda item 28. Future Development of the Agreement

a) Agreement/MoU on Raptors and Owls in the African-Eurasian region

213. The Executive Secretary introduced document Inf. 3.5 'Assessment of the merits of a CMS instrument covering migratory raptors and owls in the African-Eurasian region'. At MOP2, there had been a request for AEWA to look at other groups of birds. In the light of Inf. 3.5 it would be appropriate to reflect on the long-term requirements of AEWA and CMS, given that there was potential for the development of multiple Agreements dealing with migratory birds.

b) Agreement/MoU for the Central Asian Flyway

214. The Executive Secretary introduced the issues covered in document Inf. 3.6 'New Delhi statement on the meeting to conclude and endorse the proposed Central Asian Flyway action plan to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats'. The Central Asian Flyway (CAF) involved 30 countries, 16 of which were AEWA Range States and 14 non-Range States. A workshop had been held in India with support from CMS, AEWA, Wetlands International and other partners, but no decision had been reached on whether to take forward intergovernmental cooperation for the CAF through a new CMS Agreement or through expansion of AEWA. The CMS had undertaken to organize a new intergovernmental meeting of the relevant countries in 2006. The outcome of this would be reviewed at MOP4.

215. UNEP/CMS Secretariat presented a report providing further details on progress to date and a summary of the main pending issues. The report would be submitted to the Secretariat in writing. The CMS Secretariat appealed to interested governments and international organizations to provide financial support for the organization of the proposed intergovernmental meeting in 2006, as well as for supporting the Interim Coordination Mechanism of the CAF.

216. Uzbekistan, speaking as the only AEWA Contracting Party in the Central Asian region, and one of the two AEWA Contracting Parties in the Central Asian Flyway, said it hoped to see other countries in the region joining the Agreement in the near future. For this reason, Uzbekistan had submitted a proposal in accordance with Article X of the Agreement for extension of the AEWA Agreement Area. Uzbekistan was convinced that development of an overlapping instrument would be counterproductive and regretted that its proposal had not received the support of the Standing Committee and was consequently withdrawn. Uzbekistan assured the Meeting that it would continue to work constructively with other CAF countries and would resubmit its proposal for consideration at MOP4.

217. The Russian Federation believed that the position of most other countries in the CAF region was to support extension of AEWA as the most suitable and effective way forward, and regretted that this option had been significantly delayed.

218. Armenia fully supported the positions of Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation and was disappointed that it had not been possible to implement the option favoured by most countries in the CAF region.

219. The UNEP/CMS Secretariat acknowledged the support shown for extension of the AEWA Agreement Area. This was one possibility but CMS was not in a position to decide this through either

the AEWA MOP or CMS COP. Such a decision would have to be taken through an intergovernmental meeting of all CAF countries.

220. The Executive Secretary reported on advice received from the Depositary, which underlined an important difference between extension of an existing CMS Agreement and the development of a new Agreement. The MOP of an existing Agreement was able to decide to extend the Agreement Area.

221. Kenya reminded the Meeting that Africa was also a stakeholder in this issue. The primary mandate of AEWA was to develop measures for the conservation of waterbirds in the Agreement Area. The problem seemed to be a lack of adequate coordination between AEWA and CMS. There was a need to find an acceptable way forward, whether by extension of AEWA or a new Agreement to cover the CAF.

222. Germany urged that there should be a wider debate on the way forward, taking into consideration that proposals might be raised in future for extension of AEWA to cover, for example, the East Asian Flyway or migratory passerines. A clear strategy for AEWA and the CMS family was needed.

223. Armenia suggested that legal advice might be sought from UNEP.

224. The Vice-Chair considered that the key issues should now be clear to all delegates. There appeared to be fundamental issues that would need to be taken forward in the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters. Unless there were doubts about the legal advice received from the Depositary, this should be taken as a basis for discussions.

Agenda item 29. Reports of Sessional Committees

4th Plenary Session (24 October)

225. Germany, as Chair of the Credentials Committee, presented the Committee's first report. The credentials of 18 Contracting Parties had been accepted. The Credentials presented by four Parties were not accepted, while those of a further six Parties were considered 'borderline' cases requiring further clarification. Two Parties had recently submitted credentials that the Committee had not yet been able to evaluate formally. No credentials had yet been received from the remaining Parties. Finally, credentials had also been submitted by a number of non-Contracting Parties.

226. The Chair underlined that it was vital all remaining Parties submit their credentials as soon as possible and in time for the Committee to assess prior to its next report on 25 October.

6th Plenary Session (25 October)

227. The Chair of the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters reported that the following documents had been completed and that these would be submitted to plenary session, as revised versions where necessary, for adoption by the MOP: Res. 3.1, Res. 3.2, Res. 3.3, Res. 3.4, Res. 3.6 and Res. 3.7. The Committee had established a working group on Res. 3.17, led by the UK, and a drafting group to prepare a draft resolution (Res. 3.18) on avian influenza.

228. The Chair of the Sessional Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters reported that the group had so far focused on the Agreement's budget. The Secretariat had introduced the budget-related documentation (covering income and expenditure, priorities for financial support and priorities for private-sector fundraising) and had answered questions from delegates on these matters, which would be addressed in plenary under Agenda item 27.

7th Plenary Session (27 October)

229. The Chair of the Sessional Committee on Scientific and Technical Matters reported on the Committee's work on 25 October. The Committee had dealt with the following Agenda items and draft Resolutions:

- Agenda item 21, Res. 3.8 'Amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement' – a revised text had been approved for submission to plenary
- Agenda item 24, Res. 3.11 'AEWA International Implementation Priorities for 2006-2008' – a revised text had been approved for submission to plenary
- Agenda items 25, Res. 3.12 'Adoption and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans' – a revised text had been approved for submission to plenary
- Res. 3.17 'Climate Change and migratory waterbirds' – a revised text had been approved for submission to plenary
- Res. 3.18 'Avian influenza' – a draft text had been discussed and revisions proposed; the Committee required one further meeting to agree a text for submission to plenary.

230. The Chair of the Sessional Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters reported on the Committee's deliberations on 25 October. The Committee had finalized its work on Agenda items 22, 23, 26 b) and 26 c), and 27 a), b), d). The respective documents, as amended by the Committee, had been circulated for the plenary to consider. The Committee had not yet completed its work on Agenda item 27 c) 'Draft budget proposal'. The Committee would be meeting shortly to finalize this item for submission to the plenary.

231. The Chair of the Credentials Committee presented the Committee's second and final report. Since the first report, presented to plenary on 24 October, the credentials of 8 additional Contracting Parties had been accepted; the credentials of 6 Contracting Parties had been determined as not acceptable by the Committee; 10 Contracting Parties had not yet submitted their credentials.

232. In addition, the Committee had received credentials from some non-Contracting Parties.

233. The Executive Secretary announced that the Secretariat had just received a written proposal for a new Resolution concerning the Addis Ababa Principles. This had been prepared as an outcome of the side event held on this issue. The text would be distributed shortly as draft Resolution 3.19.

Agenda item 30. Adoption of Resolutions and Amendments to the Annexes of the Agreement

Res. 3.1 Rev.1 'Closure of the Register of International Projects'

234. The Meeting adopted the text without further amendment.

Res. 3.2 Rev.1 'Procedures to Review Biogeographic Limits of Waterbird Populations'

235. The Meeting adopted the text without further amendment.

Res. 3.3 Rev.1 'Developing Guidelines for Interpretation of Criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan'

236. The Meeting adopted the text without further amendment.

Res. 3.4 Rev.1 'Submission of National Reports to MOP3 and MOP4 and Reports on the Phase-out of Lead Shot in Wetlands'

237. In response to questions raised by the UK, speaking on behalf of the EU Member States present, and by Mauritius, the Secretariat explained that Appendix 1 to the Resolution included information received by the Secretariat up to 17 October. The Chair asked the Secretariat to update the Table as necessary for the final version to be published in the Proceedings of the MOP.

238. The Meeting adopted the text, subject to updating of Appendix 1.

Res. 3.5 Rev.2 ‘Development of an on-line National Report Format’

239. Switzerland suggested an improved formulation for the third preambular paragraph: “*Taking into account* the results from the analysis of difficulties encountered by certain Contracting Parties in delivering their national reports (see Resolution 3.4)”

240. The Meeting adopted the text subject to inclusion of the editorial amendment proposed by Switzerland.

Res. 3.6 Rev.1 ‘Developing an International Partnership for Support of Waterbird Population Estimates’

241. The Meeting adopted the text without further amendment.

Res. 3.7 ‘Implementing the Conclusions of the *Waterbirds Around the World* Conference’

242. The Meeting adopted the original text of this Resolution without amendment.

Res. 3.8. Rev.2 ‘Amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement’

243. The Meeting adopted this text without further amendment.

Res. 3.9 ‘Development of a Strategic Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)’

244. The Meeting adopted the original text of this Resolution without amendment.

Res. 3.10 ‘Communication Strategy for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)’

245. The Chair noted that, while there had been no proposals for amendments to the text of the Resolution itself, the Communication Strategy had been updated to reflect input received during the Meeting and re-circulated as document MOP 3.17 Rev.1.

246. The Meeting adopted the original text of this Resolution without amendment.

Res. 3.11 Rev.1 ‘AEWA International Implementation Priorities for 2006-2008’

247. The Meeting adopted this text without further amendment.

Res. 3.12 Rev.1 ‘Adoption and Implementation of International Single Species Action Plans’

248. The CIC made a statement to the Meeting concerning the steps it believed necessary for underpinning the credibility of the Action Plans through adequate follow-up, notably with regard to implementation. The statement was submitted in writing to the Secretariat.

249. In response to a question from the Chair of the Technical Committee, the UK proposed removing the square brackets around the words resources permitting in the sixth operative paragraph.

250. The Meeting adopted the text, subject to the inclusion of this editorial amendment.

Res. 3.13 Rev.2 ‘Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee’

251. With regard to Appendix II, the Executive Secretary reported that the Northern Africa region had nominated Mr Hamza from Libya to serve as Representative on the AEWA Technical Committee. An Alternate would be nominated in due course.

252. Uganda reported that the Eastern Africa region had decided to nominate Mr Olivier Nasirwa as Representative and Mr Archilles Byaruhanga, Uganda as Alternate.

253. On behalf of the Western Africa region, Mali reported that Mr Alfousseini Séméga, Mali, had been proposed as Representative and Mr John H. Mshelbwala, Nigeria, as Alternate.

254. In response to a question from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Executive Secretary recalled that the Middle East was grouped with Central Asia. It was up to countries in the region to decide among themselves who should be nominated. Currently, Dr Elena Kreuzberg, Uzbekistan, had been nominated as Representative.

255. The text of the Resolution was adopted without further amendment, subject to inclusion of the above updates to Appendix I.

Res. 3.14 Rev.2 ‘Financial and Administrative Matters’

256. The UK noted that there were typographical errors in operative paragraph 12, which should have read:

Requests the Standing Committee, taking into account advice from the Technical Committee, and in consultation with the Executive Secretary, to review, if necessary, the priorities set out in paragraph 11 above, except the GEF project, which remains the top priority should an unanticipated situation arise or a funding deficit materialise;

257. France, Germany and the UK also considered that the financial contributions of new Contracting Parties should appear in future as part of AEWA’s core funding. For MOP4 the budget should be organized differently so that it would be easier to obtain an overview ‘at a glance’. The budget now being tabled represented a 20% increase in compulsory contributions, which was far removed from the budget rules applied nationally by Contracting Parties and would be difficult for delegates to justify to their governments. France, Germany and the UK hoped that a significant part of the increase would be devoted to activities on the ground and that there would be the clearest possible reporting at MOP4 on the commitments made within the 2006-2008 budget. France, Germany and the UK wished to thank the Secretariat for working under difficult conditions to redraft the budget during the Meeting.

258. The Chair of the Sessional Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters thanked all those who had contributed to the Committee’s work. A spirit of compromise had ruled and a very positive result had been reached. The documents tabled for adoption provided the maximum possible clarity and transparency and set a course that was clearly oriented to the future.

259. The European Community, referring to Appendix II, requested that “EU” be changed to “European Community”. It should also be clearly indicated, as in previous versions of the text, that the EC contribution would be 2.5%, in line with the standard practice for contributions to UNEP and UNEP-related conventions/agreements.

260. The text was adopted, subject to the inclusion of the above amendments.

Res. 3.15 ‘Date, Venue and Funding of the Fourth Session of the Meeting of the Parties’

261. Wetlands International proposed that the first operative paragraph be amended to read:

Decides that the Fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP4) shall take place before the end of 2008, and urges the Secretariat to collaborate with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to ensure that MOP4 takes place after the Tenth Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention.

262. During discussion, with contributions from Switzerland, UK, UNEP/CMS Secretariat and the Executive Secretary, it was agreed that the key point was to ensure adequate liaison between the AEWA, CMS and Ramsar Secretariats. The Chair requested the Secretariat to incorporate an appropriate amendment reflecting the spirit of the interventions made.

263. Switzerland was concerned that in the absence of a host country, it would not make sense to adopt the second operative paragraph.

264. Madagascar announced, that while it was not yet an AEWA Contracting Party, the ratification process should be completed by the end of the year, and Madagascar would be honoured to host the Fourth Meeting of Parties in 2008. This statement was greeted by acclamation from the floor.

265. The Chair warmly thanked and congratulated Madagascar on behalf of the Meeting and recalled that arrangements for MOP4 would be dealt with in more detail under Agenda item 31.

266. The text was adopted, subject to the inclusion by the Secretariat of an amendment to capture the spirit of discussion on operative paragraph 1, and the insertion of Madagascar in operative paragraph 2.

Res. 3.16 ‘Tribute to the Organisers’

267. The Meeting adopted the original text of this Resolution by acclamation.

Res. 3.17 Rev.2 Corr.1 ‘Climate Change and Migratory Waterbirds’

268. The Meeting adopted the text of this Resolution without further amendment.

Res. 3.18 Rev.2 ‘Avian Influenza’

269. The Meeting adopted the text of this Resolution without further amendment.

270. France proposed that the Meeting’s deliberations on the issue of avian influenza be summarised in a press release. AEWA had a clear role in communicating objective technical information, with a focus on migratory waterbirds. Senegal supported this proposal, referring to contradictory and alarming reports that had appeared in the national and international media over recent days.

271. The Chair requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a press release in conjunction with interested delegations.

Res. 3.19 ‘Implementing the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity’

272. The Chair recalled that this was a new draft Resolution submitted as a direct output of a side event held in association with the MOP and coordinated by CIC with support from FACE, the EC and AEWA.

273. CIC introduced the draft text and suggested inclusion of an additional paragraph, concerning the single species action plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*), as agreed by the Technical Sessional Committee on 25 October 2005:

“In order to secure the credibility of the work done by AEWA on the single species action plans – in particular the draft plan on the Dark-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*), which has now been in process for almost 10 years – CIC is conscious about the follow up, and refers to Recommendation 2.1 from MOP2. CIC recommends that information on the status of this plan is published together with the output from TC6 and MOP3”.

274. The Meeting adopted the text of this Resolution without amendments. The new paragraph suggested by CIC was decided to be left in this report and a short report on the status of the species action plan in question to be appended.

Res. 3.20 ‘Request to the Government of the Republic of Senegal’

275. The Chair reported that this was a new draft Resolution submitted by Senegal, on behalf of the group of African participants that had met earlier in the day and requesting the Republic of Senegal to take measures on behalf of all African states.

276. The EC fully supported the goal of strengthening links with NEPAD and the African Union. However, it would be helpful if the first operative paragraph could be amended as follows to take account of legal considerations: “Requests the Government of Senegal to approach the African Union to support African Contracting Parties and to enhance regional coordination and to assess the legal aspects of a possible ratification in view of the provisions of the CMS and the Agreement”. Furthermore, in the third preambular paragraph, the words “with regard to biodiversity” should be inserted after “*Conscious* of the link”.

277. The Meeting adopted the original text of this Resolution, subject to inclusion of the above amendments.

Decision 3.1 ‘Decision regarding the Executive Secretary of AEWA’

278. UNEP/CMS: reiterated the statement to the Meeting made by Mr Bakary Kante on behalf of UNEP’s Executive Director on 24 October.

279. The Chair asked the Vice-Chair to coordinate a small discussion sub-group, including the Chair of the Standing Committee, the Chair of the Sessional Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters, Germany, Switzerland, UK, and UNEP, to finalize proposed amendments to the text.

280. The Vice-Chair reported back from the group with proposed amendments to the second preambular paragraph, deletion of the third and fourth preambular paragraphs and insertion of a new preambular paragraph:

Noting with great appreciation that UNEP has informed the Third Meeting of the Parties that active steps are being undertaken for the recruitment of an Executive Secretary for AEWA and that therefore this process shall be finalized as soon as possible in line with UN recruitment procedures,

Acknowledging with great appreciation the successes the AEWA Secretariat reached so far, as already reflected in the report of the Chair of the Standing Committee to the Third Meeting of the Parties and in Resolution 3.16 which paid tribute to the organizers of the Third Meeting of the Parties.

281. The Meeting adopted the text of the Decision, subject to inclusion of the above amendments.

Agenda item 31. Date and venue of the Fourth Meeting of the Parties

282. The Meeting formally endorsed, by acclamation, Madagascar as the host of the Fourth Meeting of Parties (MOP4). Madagascar thanked the Meeting for its support, looked forward to working with the AEWA Secretariat and Parties and ensured participants of Madagascar's wholehearted commitment to making MOP4 a success.

283. The Chair requested that, in line with discussions on Resolution 3.15, consultations be held between the Government of Madagascar, AEWA, CMS, Wetlands International, and the Ramsar Convention, in order to arrange a mutually convenient date in 2008.

Agenda item 32. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting

284. The draft Report of the 1st and 2nd Plenary sessions, held on Sunday, 23 October 2005, were adopted by the Meeting without amendment.

285. The draft Report of the 3rd and 4th Plenary sessions, held on Monday 24 October 2005, were adopted by the Meeting without amendment.

286. With regard to the draft Report of the 5th and 6th Plenary sessions, held on Tuesday 24 October 2005, Morocco pointed out that paragraph number 197 should refer to the Alternate, not to the Representative. UNEP/CMS Secretariat referred to a proposal for an additional paragraph to be inserted after paragraph number 92. The text of the new paragraph, which had been handed to the Secretariat, was read to the Meeting. The Report of the 5th and 6th Plenary sessions was adopted subject to the inclusion of these amendments, and incorporation of various editorial corrections already submitted in writing to the rapporteurs.

Agenda item 33. Other matters

287. There were no other matters raised by the Chair or from the floor.

Agenda item 34. Closure of the Meeting

(a) Closure of business session

288. The Chair and Vice-Chair made closing remarks, reflecting on the positive conclusions of the Meeting and thanking all participants, the Secretariat, interpreters and translators and especially the Senegalese hosts.

289. Angola thanked Senegal and the AEWA Secretariat and announced that Angola would be launching the procedure for accession to the Agreement in the near future. This announcement was greeted by acclamation.

(b) Closing ceremony

290. The closing ceremony was presided over by His Excellency Mr Thierno Lo, Minister of Environment and Nature Protection, Republic of Senegal.

291. Closing speeches were delivered by the Chairman and by the Executive Secretary, both of whom underlined their gratitude to the Republic of Senegal, and in particular to the Ministry of Environment

and Nature Protection and the National Parks Directorate, for its enormous contribution to AEWA through hosting MOP3.

292. In the name of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and Government of Senegal, the Minister of Environment and Nature Protection made his closing address. He referred to the President of the Republic's great interest in the Meeting's deliberations, notably those concerning avian influenza – an issue of special importance to Senegal given the significant economic value of ecotourism in and around wetlands. The Republic of Senegal was grateful to AEWA for having entrusted the country with organizing the Meeting of Parties and thanked participants for the high quality of the work completed. It was nevertheless important to look beyond immediate outcomes and towards implementation of the AEWA Action Plan, especially in Africa. In this respect, the Government of Senegal reiterated its thanks to the Government of the Netherlands for its ongoing support. Thanks were also due to international governmental and non-governmental organizations that had worked for the success of the Meeting. In formally declaring the Third Meetings of Parties closed, the Minister invited all those involved with AEWA to continue consolidating the international partnership and transboundary cooperation required to ensure the long-term conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.