



*AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS*

17th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
30 June 2021, Virtual Conference Format

REPORT OF THE MEETING

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Summary of StC17 Decisions

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION
Agenda item 2	Adoption of the Agenda	The agenda was adopted and the StC members will have a closed session on the Coordination of International Single Species and Management Plans immediately after the closure of the meeting.
Agenda item 3	Adoption of the Report of the 16 th Meeting of the Standing Committee	The report will be adopted at the next meeting of the StC at the end of July.
Agenda item 4	Venue / Format and Date of MOP8	A letter including a questionnaire to all Parties will be drafted by the Secretariat and Hungary and sent by the StC regional representatives to receive the Parties' views. Final decision on the format and date of the MOP will be taken at the end of July meeting.
Agenda item 5	Budget Scenarios for 2022-2024	The Secretariat will further strengthen document AEWA/StC17.2 and further comments to be provided by the StC on both documents AEWA/StC17.2 and AEWA/StC17 DR12 in advance of the July meeting.
Agenda item 6	Coordination of International Single Species and Management Plans	The Secretariat will draft a letter to be reviewed by the StC to clarify that the coordinators can continue the work with Parties and Range States. The legal issues will be clarified in parallel.
Agenda item 7	Date and Venue of the 18 th Meeting of the Standing Committee	The Secretariat will send a doodle poll link to identify a date for the next StC meeting at the end of July. Comments on the budget document to be provided one week in advance of the meeting.

Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Standing Committee Chair, United Kingdom, and representative of Europe and Central Asia, Mr Simon Mackown, opened the 17th Meeting of the Standing Committee (StC) by warmly welcoming all participants, noting that there was a light agenda, however, with some important issues to be discussed. He hoped the meeting would not take longer than just a few hours.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Agenda

2. Referring to document AEWA/StC17.1, *Provisional Agenda*, Mr Mackown suggested, in addition to the open discussion, to have a closed session immediately after the closure of the meeting with the StC members only regarding the Coordination of International Single Species and Management Plans.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The agenda was adopted and the StC members will have a closed session on the Coordination of International Single Species and Management Plans immediately after the closure of the meeting.</i>
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Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Report of the 16th Meeting of the Standing Committee

3. Mr Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary, informed everyone that there had so far been only one minor comment from Dr Ruth Cromie, Technical Committee Chair, which would be taken into consideration when finalising the report.

4. Ms Wilmar Remmelts, The Netherlands and StC member as representative of the Depositary, said that she had browsed through the report and that it seemed fine. However, she would have welcomed some more time to review it more thoroughly.

5. Mr Trouvilliez proposed to adopt the report at the next meeting of the StC at the end of July. Mr Mackown and all other StC members agreed to this proposal.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The report will be adopted at the next meeting of the StC at the end of July.</i>
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Agenda item 4. Venue / Format and Date of MOP8

6. Introducing this agenda item, Mr Mackown reminded everyone that the StC had requested for more details on some of the options that had been outlined at the last meeting, in particular on the implications of postponing the MOP. With that he handed over to Mr Trouvilliez.

7. Mr Trouvilliez informed everyone that he had a fruitful discussion with the High Commissioner of the “One with Nature” Exhibition and the Government of Hungary, during which they confirmed that Hungary would be able to provide vaccines to all delegates that have not been vaccinated yet or where it may not be available. The vaccines would probably be distributed through the respective Hungarian and possibly other EU Embassies as well as through UN duty stations, where applicable.

8. Dr Gábor Magyar, StC member Hungary, host country of MPO8, gave an overview of the current situation in Hungary both in terms of the organisation of the exhibition as well as around COVID-19.

9. The online ticket sale for the exhibition had been launched and countries and organisations had already started to register for the pavilions. Dr Magyar explained that there would be a series of conferences alongside the exhibition, some of which would be held physically and some in a hybrid format.

10. Dr Magyar proceeded to say a few words about the current situation in Hungary regarding the pandemic. Almost 5.5 million people have been vaccinated, which makes around 64% of those people eligible for vaccination. So far 808,000 people have been tested positive. An estimated 75% of the population has gained immunity either through vaccination or recovery. A recent statistic from 29 June showed that there had been only 12 new positive cases in Budapest (15 cases in a 7-day average) and the nationwide reported cases were 34 on June 29 (56 cases as a 7-day average). So far there have only been 5 cases of the Delta variant.

11. Referring to the relevant paragraph in the Host Country Agreement, Dr Magyar emphasised that all delegates would receive the necessary visas and documentation to be able to enter Hungary. He further reiterated that vaccinations would be sent to those official delegates, who would otherwise not receive a vaccination in time. Dr Magyar added that the necessary precautionary measures during the exhibition would be taken.

12. Ms Remmelts took the floor and was curious about the mentioned precautionary measures. She was also very concerned about what would happen after the summer holidays, when people have travelled.

13. Although Ms Remmelts was positive about what Dr Magyar had said, she thought it was hard to predict what would happen after the summer. Ms Remmelts was interested to hear from the African and Asian countries what they thought, since it was important that they felt comfortable to travel.

14. Ms Humbu Mafumo, StC member, South Africa, representative of Southern and Eastern Africa, thanked Hungary for their generous offer to arrange vaccinations for certain delegations. However, due to the high number of COVID cases in Africa, it was currently uncertain if delegations could travel at all. There needed to be clarity on how many members of one delegation could be vaccinated.

15. Ms Nadjiba Bendjedda, StC member, Algeria, representative of Northern Africa and the Middle East, made a comment in French, which Mr Trouvilliez interpreted. She thanked Hungary for willing to organise the MOP during this difficult time as well as for offering to arrange vaccinations. However, she was concerned about boarders possibly being closed in some countries, which would prevent some delegations to travel.

16. Mr Mackown noted that the questions raised so far reflected the questions that he had as well. It was not only the question of delegates being vaccinated, but also about their ability to travel. Taking the UK as an example under current rules, Mr Mackown said that he could travel to Hungary but would have to quarantine for two weeks upon his return to the UK in an hotel at his own cost. This had repercussions on work, finances and family life. That may change by October, but it was not guaranteed. Others may not even be able to travel in the first place or not be able to return.

17. Mr Mackown had two further questions. He pointed out that vaccinations depended on the adoption of the vaccines by the medical authorities in those countries. Hungary's offer to arrange for the vaccinations was very generous but there also needed to be an assurance that the vaccines provided would be recognised by the delegates' home countries. Also, if a delegate had a vaccine that was not accepted by Hungary would that impact the ability to travel into Hungary? Mr Mackown would like to see the MOP go ahead but emphasised that all the mentioned issues needed to be addressed.

18. Mr Jürgen Friedrich, representative of Germany, highlighted the issue of the Delta variant and that it was not known how it would develop. Currently the numbers of Delta variant cases were rising in Germany and there was a big debate going on about what would happen after the summer holidays. He had also heard that numbers were rising in Africa and that the situation was becoming more dire. It was also not clear yet which vaccines function how with that variant. Mr Friedrich also pointed out that other international meetings have either been postponed to 2022 or would take place online.

19. Dr Magyar regretted that some questions were currently impossible to answer, but that he would try to address some of them.

20. First of all, vaccines would be offered to as many delegates as would be in an official delegation. Second, regarding the questions around travel and quarantine, Dr Magyar said that proof of

vaccination would be accepted by Hungary as long as the vaccines were officially accepted by the health authorities. A quarantine in Hungary would then not be necessary.

21. Mr Mackown acknowledged that it was difficult to know how to move forward on the issue as there were too many unknowns. He did not feel that the StC was in a place to make a decision now and proposed to ask all the Parties through a joint letter including a questionnaire from the Secretariat and Hungary what their views were.

22. South Africa, The Netherlands and Germany as an observer supported the proposal made by the UK. Mr Mackown asked the Secretariat and Hungary to draft a letter to be sent to the Parties as soon as possible.

23. Mr Trouvilliez agreed and suggested that the StC members consult with each other and coordinate the questions to be included in the letter to be sent out by the regional representatives of the StC. He added that the Secretariat and Hungary would do their best to have all countries participate should the decision for a physical meeting be taken.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>A letter including a questionnaire to all Parties will be drafted by the Secretariat and Hungary and sent by the StC regional representatives to receive the Parties' views. Final decision on the format and date of the MOP will be taken at the end of July meeting.</i>
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Agenda item 5. Budget Scenarios for 2022-2024

24. Referring to document AEWA/StC17.2 *Draft Budget Proposal for 2022-2024*, Mr Trouvilliez explained that a new budget scenario had been added, as was requested by the last StC meeting. In addition, the StC had requested the Secretariat to provide a clear overview on what would be covered and what would be missing under each scenario as well as to provide sound argumentation for each new post to be integrated in the budget.

25. Mr Trouvilliez explained that there were two options for the new scenario. First, it could integrate all current Secretariat posts and therewith consolidate the current staff situation and performance of the Secretariat. Alternatively, this scenario could focus on the establishment of a post for a Compliance Officer and, in addition, gradually or partially improve the situation of the existing posts that depend on voluntary contributions.

26. Ms Remmelts noted that the StC had asked the Secretariat to outline the scenarios more precisely including what would be missing without sufficient funding. She found that this was still missing in the document. Ms Remmelts further thought there should be scenarios indicating what was core business and what was not. The post of the Coordinator of International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs) for instance should be included under the core business. Since Norway had been paying for the post with voluntary contributions for 14 years it has been taken for granted. Ms Remmelts thought that countries needed to be more aware of what they got for their money and that if they wanted more they should pay more. She thought that this was still not set out clearly enough in the document.

27. Mr Trouvilliez responded that in the past, the core budget was not large enough to fund all positions needed to comply with the obligations of the Agreement. Some countries such as Switzerland, France, Germany and Norway have funded positions not covered by the core budget.

Especially both positions dealing with the African Initiative were fully funded through voluntary contributions until 50% of these posts were integrated in the core budget by MOP5 and MOP6 respectively, leaving funding gaps to be covered by voluntary contributions. There was of course no doubt that all positions funded by the core budget were linked to the Secretariat's obligations of the Agreement. Specific programmes such as the European Goose Management Platform are funded through voluntary contributions. To fulfil all its obligations, the Secretariat did not only need an Officer for the coordination of the ISSAPs, but also a Compliance Officer and a Technical Committee Support Officer. Each of these positions are linked to an article of the Agreement or to a decision of the MOP.

28. Mr Mackown said that the African Initiative positions for example did not have a core function compared to the position of the coordination of ISSMPs. He agreed with Ms Remmelts, that core functions needed to be set out clearer. Furthermore, there needed to be a stronger argumentation for scenario two saying that the Secretariat would not be able to deliver on their obligations should it be the preferred option.

29. Ms Remmelts added that the relation between the workplan and the budget needed to be made clear and that the document should also refer to core workplan activities. This would hopefully lead to an understanding that more money was needed.

30. Dr Cromie thought that funding for a second in-person TC meeting was needed. She felt that an ideal model for TC delivery would be a face-to-face meeting in the first year after MOP, which was the year with new TC members. It was difficult in the past to engage them. A face-to-face meeting could help integrate them better and foster more creative ways of working. The next meeting could be a virtual one and then there could be another face-to-face meeting where products could be finalised. Dr Cromie did, however, appreciate the consequences of two in-person meetings.

31. Mr Mackown welcomed Dr Cromie's proposal and thought that the StC could make a sacrifice for the TC to have more in-person meetings. The TC, after all, delivered most of the products. He thought it would be worth including that additional funding. He added that he noticed a line in the document suggesting the Secretariat would not need to do fundraising under some of the scenarios but thought there was always a need to do so. Mr Trouvilliez responded that that would be clarified in the updated version of the document. It should be understood that fundraising for regular costs would not be needed anymore under a scenario covering all costs of maintenance etc, meaning that fundraising tasks could then fully focus on the programmatic tasks. Not meaning that the Secretariat would not fundraise anymore.

32. In summarising what had been said so far, Mr Mackown outlined that the StC would like to see further strengthening of the document. The risks needed to be set out much clearer and the link to the workplan needed to be more explicit. He was conscious that the document was to be adopted at the meeting at the end of July and suggested that the Secretariat made amendments and circulated the document. Further comments would be provided in advance of the July meeting.

33. Mr Trouvilliez pointed out that the document had to be uploaded at the latest on 7 July in accordance with the 90-day deadline as set in the Agreement text and was doubtful to receive all comments by then. He therefore suggested there would be a revised version published on the AEWA MOP8 webpage which would then take into account all comments received by the July meeting.

34. Ms Sabine Herzog, representative of Switzerland, was happy about what had been proposed. She said that she needed to write the mandate for MOP now. In the current document, however, the payable amounts for the countries were missing. Ms Herzog wanted to know if the Secretariat would add those to the version to be uploaded by 7 July.

35. Mr Trouvilliez responded that the calculations could hopefully be finalised by then.

36. Ms Remmelts thought the post of the Information Assistant was part of the agreement with CMS to reduce costs. Now it looked like the costs were increasing with the 20% increase of the post suggested under Scenario 3 bis and 4 and created a substantial part of the budget under these scenarios.

37. Mr Trouvilliez explained that through some savings the Secretariat had been able to maintain the post at 80%, CMS added 20% in order to have a full-time post. In addition to the administrative support provided to the IMCA Team, the incumbent also produced desktop publications, and developed and maintained websites such as the ones for the ISSAPs. The MOP would have to set priorities at MOP8 and would be free to decide not to prioritize communication but to request the Secretariat to reduce the communication activities linked to waterbirds conservation.

38. Mr Mackown thought that a justification was needed as to what the post should deliver. He was not convinced that the Parties received value for money from it. If the budget was to be increased, he would want to see additional output.

39. Mr Trouvilliez said that despite the Secretariat's efforts it was not able to accumulate any savings. Of course, positions could be closed, which would save some money. It would, however, decrease the quality and the quantity of the communication delivered.

40. Mr Mackown suggested to add this to the agenda for the next meeting of the StC.

41. Mr Friedrich asked whether the post of the Coordinator of ISSAPs was a P2 or a P3 in the past. He agreed that there needed to be more precision and risk analysis in the document.

42. Mr Trouvilliez clarified that the post was a P2 initially and that it had been upgraded to a P3 due to an increased portfolio in agreement with the donor and after a thorough analysis made by UNEP which has the responsibility of (re-)classifying posts.

43. Mr Mackown reiterated that the document needed to be strengthened further and that the StC was to provide comments in advance of the next meeting in July. He emphasised that it should be an iterative process, which would be more productive.

44. Referring to document AEWA/StC17 DR12, *Draft Resolution on Financial and Administrative Matters*, Mr Trouvilliez asked the StC whether they would agree to submit it to the MOP as it was or whether they needed more time to review it.

45. Mr Mackown proposed to postpone the adoption of DR12 until the July meeting so the Standing Committee could review it along with the revised budget document.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Secretariat will further strengthen document AEWA/StC17.2 and further comments to be provided by the StC on both documents AEWA/StC17.2 and AEWA/StC17 DR12 in advance of the July meeting.</i>
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Agenda item 6. Coordination of International Single Species and Management Plans

46. Introducing this agenda item, Mr Mackown said that The Netherlands and Germany had raised through a letter to the Secretariat some concerns regarding the pausing of the work on the Species and Management Plans. With that he opened the floor to Ms Remmelts and Mr Friedrich to set out the issues they saw.

47. Ms Remmelts recalled that Norway said at the last StC meeting that they would restore their funding depending on the outcome of the Lesser White-fronted Goose Action Plan discussions. They were of course in their own right to make such a decision. However, it came as a surprise when The Netherlands received several letters from the Secretariat about temporarily pausing the coordination and activities of the Working and Expert Groups.

48. Thereupon, The Netherlands received legal advice from their ministries. Ms Remmelts said that it was up to the Parties to decide about the work the Secretariat should be doing. It was not up to the Secretariat to unilaterally, without consulting the StC or the Parties, annul any agreement regarding the Coordination of International Working Groups or postpone the work. The Netherlands fully understood the enormous staffing problem that Norway's decision had caused at the Secretariat. However, The Netherlands thought that the Secretariat should not have sent the letter without having had a discussion on how to deal with the gap in their staffing.

49. Furthermore, a certain routine had been followed regarding the Working Groups with the core role of the Secretariat being the facilitator of the work. No options had been presented on how the work could move forward. In addition, Ms Remmelts thought that no country should be in a position to voluntarily finance a post at the Secretariat to achieve a certain result on content. That was contradictory to the level playing field of all Parties. It also undermined the integrity of the Secretariat. The Netherlands regretted that in all the letters it was referred to the outcome of the LWfG discussion at the upcoming MOP.

50. Finally, The Netherlands felt that the Secretariat had stepped over their mandate by sending the letters and that it should have first communicated the problem and discussed a way forward.

51. Mr Friedrich echoed what Ms Remmelts said and thought she presented the issues well. He wanted to, however, add to what she said to avoid any misunderstandings.

52. Germany also fully understood the capacity issues of the Secretariat and was not complaining about the work not being done. What they were complaining about was that the Secretariat acted without consulting the Parties. It was about making sure the Secretariat followed the legal rules, which was that Parties set the priorities and not the Secretariat. The Secretariat was facilitator and coordinator.

53. Another point was that there needed to be a differentiation between the temporary pause and the longer-term announcement. Regarding the temporary pause Germany thought the Secretariat should

have gotten in touch with the StC with regards to its capacity problems. However, the Secretariat went even further in saying that the Working Groups could be dissolved should there not be a positive outcome at the MOP regarding the post of the Coordinator. This was pre-empting a MOP decision, which took away the MOPs right to decide which priorities it would want to see implemented.

54. Mr Mackown added that the UK had also sought legal advice. The conclusion of that concurred with what Ms Remmelts and Mr Friedrich had just presented in that there should have been a role for the StC and the Parties to take a view on the approach going forward. While recognising and fully appreciating the difficult situation the Secretariat was in, Mr Mackown emphasised the issue being around process and decision-making.

55. Mr Trouvilliez summarised what had been said at the previous meeting of the StC. The letter from Norway had been received on 3 May, one day before the StC16 meeting and Mr Trouvilliez had informed the StC that the Secretariat could not recruit a replacement for Ms Nina Mikander, who had been on the Coordinator post, without a secured funding. Therefore, the Secretariat would be forced to pause the coordination of some of the Working and Expert Groups. During the meeting Norway had explained their position, after which no Party approached the Secretariat to offer to partly fund the post.

56. Mr Mackown intervened to say that the UK did approach the Secretariat to offer to look for a way how the UK could provide funding for the post. He thought the issue was not whether or not funding could be provided in the interim period, but it was more about not being able to recruit someone for 6 months and then let them go if funding was not forthcoming afterwards.

57. Mr Trouvilliez continued by addressing the point that was made about the Secretariat not having consulted with the StC and the Parties. He reminded that the letter had been received one day before the StC meeting and that he had informed immediately the StC members and observers of the impact such lack of resources could have on the work of the Secretariat. The Netherlands and Germany were raising a legal issue, which Mr Trouvilliez did not want to comment on, since the Secretariat first wanted to consult with the UN legal services.

58. Ms Remmelts thought it was totally fair for the Secretariat to seek legal advice first, but the question was how to move forward with the action plans in the interim. There should be more options than the one suggested by the Secretariat in its letters.

59. Another point Mr Friedrich wanted to make was that of course Germany would have wanted to avoid sending such a letter. He thought that in the interest of working together it would have helped if the Secretariat had attempted to consult with Parties, which he thought should be a normal routine. He invited the Secretariat to include Parties in its decision-making going forward, especially when it came to what should be covered with the scarce resources.

60. Ms Nina Mikander, representative of Finland, noted that Finland had not seen the letter sent by The Netherlands and Germany and that Finland did not attend the last meeting of the StC in full. Finland was, therefore, not able to follow the discussions very closely. If appropriate, it would be useful if the joint German and Dutch letter could be shared with other Parties.

61. Ms Mikander said that the legal issue was not something Finland considered when it received the letter from the Secretariat. They thought of it more as a wake-up call to Finland as a Party that had

also been relying on Norway funding the post for so many years. As to what could be done going forward and additional options there had already been discussions at the TC on a possible restructuring of the established coordination mechanisms. Now might be a good opportunity to look into the issue more closely to see how the species action planning and coordination could be moved forward in a more sustainable way.

62. Ms Mafumo added to what the previous speakers said saying that South Africa was one of the Parties that was affected by the work of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group being paused. As a matter of a principle and in moving forward, at least a consultation should be conducted before a decision was made.

63. Ms Nicola Crockford, representative of BirdLife International, thought it was fantastic to see the recognition of the added value and that the Working Groups were one of the core elements of the Secretariat's work. The focus should be on how to solve the problem of the resources to continue the work that Ms Mikander had been doing as the previous ISSAP coordinator.

64. Ms Crockford admitted that she was very sad to hear all the talk about lawyers. She wondered if that was really how the Parties wanted to solve the problem. She thought everyone should just accept the current situation, back off from the lawyers and sort the issue out in a sensible way.

65. Ms Anne Martinussen, representative of Norway, introduced herself as being the new National Focal point as Mr Oystein Storkersen was moving to another position. Norway had also been discussing amongst themselves what a possible solution could be. She pointed out that Norway saw it as problematic to include the Swedish LWfG population in the international action plan. They were sad to see the unfortunate effects that that would have on the Secretariat. One solution could be that a separate action plan for the Swedish population was made, which could be financed separately. That could allow Norway to continue its funding.

66. Mr Dereliev clarified that the coordinators of the working groups were not only informed, but that different options were discussed with them. Options were found for many of the working groups and the coordinators volunteered to continue their work. The Secretariat had been acting in good faith in trying to find a solution, even though the Secretariat itself could not continue being involved in the arrangements. The Secretariat's action has been trying to remedy the issue and to find options to continue the work and it had been the case for all the action plans except two. Regrettably, there had not been a response from the coordinators of the Black-tailed Godwit and the Eurasian Curlew working groups. They were not willing to communicate with the Secretariat on the matter. Mr Dereliev emphasised once more that there had not only been simple information sessions with the coordinators, but that there had been conversations on how the work could continue under the new circumstances for the next few months until MOP8.

67. Ms Remmelts reiterated that she would have appreciated being contacted first, rather than receiving the letter annulling the MoU regarding the coordination. That would have been a more pleasant way of working.

68. In response, Mr Dereliev emphasised that the implementation of the arrangements with the coordinators had been paused due to the temporary issues the Secretariat was facing. It was not an annulment, as was stated by Ms Remmelts. It was also not true that the implementation of the action plans had been suspended by the Secretariat, as said earlier by other speakers. Action plan

implementation is an obligation of the Parties and the Secretariat has no powers to waive it. All the Secretariat had done was to reflect on the arrangements it had made with third parties.

69. Mr Mackown thought that it was positive to hear that there were productive conversations around trying to make the work continue. The Parties' major concern was that the work would just stop.

70. Mr Friedrich echoed what Mr Mackown said. He also stated that the coordinators did not represent the Parties of the Treaty and in Germany's view it would not have been difficult to consult with these. Mr Friedrich highlighted once more that one issue was how to temporarily deal with the issue, but the letter also announced that depending on the outcome of the LWfG ISSAP issue and the continuation or suspension of the financial support this pause may be revoked and business restored or maybe made permanent. In the latter case the Secretariat would dissolve the working groups. The concern here was that the Secretariat was pre-empting a decision.

71. Mr Mackown thought the difficulty with the letter was also that there was no indication that there had been discussions with the coordinators. It did not come through in the letters that the Secretariat was working on a solution in the background. It came across as a decision by the Secretariat to stop everything.

72. He said that there were some lessons learnt with regards to communication and that the discussions should have been laid out more clearly in the letter and also that it would have been better to consult with the StC in advance.

73. In terms of next steps, Mr Mackown said that there were two issues. Firstly, there was the ongoing issue of the working groups and what they could continue to do in the interim period where there was an inability due to lack of resources for the Secretariat to provide any support. It would be good to understand whether there was support from Parties to help some of the working groups continue or to improve engagement. Secondly, there was the issue of the decision of the MOP and how that was presented in the letter. Mr Mackown said that he would rather leave that pending the outcome of the legal advice from the UN. That could not be resolved now.

74. Mr Trouvilliez said that he would have preferred to have these discussions during this StC, and Germany and The Netherlands could have sent a letter if the discussions had no satisfying outcome. Now that a legal issue had been raised in writing to the Secretariat, the Secretariat had no choice but to also ask for legal advice from the UN legal services. With regards to the coordination of the working groups, it was probably the best to continue temporarily without the Secretariat's support.

75. Mr Dereliev added that the work of the Secretariat in facilitating the coordination of some of the action plans was continuing. But these were action plans not affected by the situation, such as those for Critically Endangered species and intra-African migrants as well as those under the remit of the European Goose Management Platform. The Secretariat was unfortunately not in a position to add further work to the officer's dealing with those. Many of the coordinators were willing to continue their work even if the Secretariat could not support them. Further to the coordinators there were also working group Chairs. Possibly between the Chairs and the coordinators in discussion with other interested Range States a solution could be found how to continue the work. Mr Dereliev hoped that clarified the situation and provided a way forward.

76. Ms Remmerts thought it would be helpful if the Secretariat sent a letter explaining what the options were for continuing the work of the working groups.

77. Mr Mackown supported Ms Remmert's proposal and Mr Trouvilliez agreed to send an additional letter outlining the options.

78. In concluding, Mr Mackown thought that it really highlighted the issues around funding and that if there were any positives that could be drawn out of all of the discussions the need for Parties to provide adequate funding for the Secretariat to deliver on core functions had been brought into sharp focus.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Secretariat will draft a letter to be reviewed by the StC to clarify that the coordinators can continue the work with Parties and Range States. The legal issues will be clarified in parallel.</i>
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Agenda item 7. Date and Venue of the 18th Meeting of the Standing Committee

79. Mr Trouvilliez informed everyone that the next meeting of the StC was planned for the last week of July and that the Secretariat would send a Doodle poll link in order to identify an exact date during that week. He proposed that the deadline for providing comments on the budget document should be one week in advance of the meeting.

80. Mr Mackown agreed and added that comments on the budget document from observers were welcome but needed to be supported by the StC members.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Secretariat will send a doodle poll link to identify a date for the next StC meeting at the end of July. Comments on the budget document to be provided one week in advance of the meeting.</i>
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Agenda item 8. Any Other Business

81. Mr Oliver Schall, representative of Germany, informed everyone that the joint meeting of the Eurasian Curlew and Black-tailed Godwit Working Groups was postponed to February 2022. He explained that the new Delta variant of the Corona virus was currently too unpredictable to be able to confirm the meeting for November 2021.

82. There were no further items under any other business.

Agenda item 9. Closure of the Meeting

83. Mr Mackown thanked everyone for their participation and asked the StC members to stay on the call for a closed session in order to further discuss the Coordinator post for the International Single Species and Management Plans.

84. With that the Chair declared the meeting closed.

ANNEX I – List of Participants

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