

## FOURTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

20-21 November 2006, Bonn, Germany

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# OVERVIEW ON THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AEWA COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

(As of 1 September 2006)

### Introduction

At its third session, which took place from 23-27 October 2005 in Senegal, the Meeting of the Parties adopted by Resolution 3.10 the Communication Strategy for AEWA. As laid down in this Resolution the Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Adopts* the Communication Strategy, contained in Annex 1 to this Resolution as an instrument to effectively address the conservation of waterbirds on the flyway level;
2. *Instructs* the AEWA Secretariat to implement the Communication Strategy to extend possible taking into account resources available, to review its effectiveness on a regular basis and to report on its implementation to the meetings of the Standing Committee and to the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties;
3. *Further instructs* the Secretariat to undertake specific efforts to obtain additional resources for the implementation of the Communication Strategy;
4. *Urges* Contracting Parties, donors and private sector sponsors to provide supplementary financial support to enable the Secretariat to realize all identified activities of the Strategy;
5. *Invites* all Parties, Range States and other stakeholders along the African-Eurasian Flyway to support the implementation of the Communication Strategy at the global, regional, national or local levels, as appropriate, with the expertise, networks, skills and resources at their disposal;
6. *Encourages* all Contracting Parties to host AEWA Exchange Centers for their region, as stipulated in the Communication Strategy;
7. *Further encourages* all representatives of Contracting Parties and partner organisations to envisage functioning as ambassador to AEWA in order to help the Secretariat with the recruitment of new Parties to AEWA.

The operational paragraph of Resolution 3.10 makes clear that implementation of the Communication Strategy is a shared responsibility of particularly the Contracting Parties and the Agreement Secretariat.

The Meeting of the Parties expressed their great appreciation for the support given by the government of the United Kingdom for the development of the Communication Strategy, for the support of government of Germany which is providing a Junior Professional Officer to strengthen the capacity within the Secretariat to implement the Strategy and for the support of the government of Luxembourg for enabling the Secretariat to produce new outreach materials.

This report will inform you about the implementation of the Communication Strategy since MOP3 as far as done by the Agreement Secretariat. The AEWA Communication Action Plan 2006-2008, which is attached to the Communications Strategy as Annex 1, will be used as a basis to report back on progress made.

As said before the implementation of the Communication Strategy is a shared responsibility. Therefore

the Secretariat would welcome any information from Contracting Parties and partner organisations regarding their activities conducted towards implementing the AEWA Communication Strategy. Further input from Parties would enable us to draw a more complete picture on the current status of the implementation of the Communications Strategy.

### **Communication capacity**

Before starting to report back on the progress made on the implementation of the Communication Strategy it would be good to recall what has been said in the Communication Strategy that the capacity for communication will determine the extent to which the Communication Strategy can be implemented. Capacity can be assessed in terms of human resources, technical expertise and financial resources. To start with the latter with the new set up of the AEWA budget 2006-2008 the implementation of the Communication Strategy is fully dependent on voluntary contributions of Contracting Parties or organisations. Since MOP3 very little funds have come in to support the implementation of the Strategy. Regarding the human resources it should be noted that the Junior Professional Officer provided by the government of Germany is working 20 percent of his time for the CMS Family; 50 percent of his time is allocated to the African-Eurasian GEF Flyways Project, which means that he currently only has 30 percent of his time available to implement the AEWA Communication Strategy. Although the implementation of the Strategy is his responsibility all other AEWA Staff members are also involved in this albeit for probably only a few hours a week. It is foreseen that the post of Information Assistant as agreed by MOP3 will be filled as of 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2006. With entering on duty of the Junior Professional Officer the technical expertise within the Secretariat got a boost. It is hoped that in coming years the level of technical expertise will increase further.

### **Internal communication**

*Objective 1: to stimulate and increase the effective internal communication and exchange among the formal governing bodies of the Agreement*

The activities foreseen under this heading in the Communication Strategy are:

- 1.1 Increase interactivity of meetings
- 1.2 Increase interactivity in-between meetings
- 1.3 Evaluation of regional presentation in AEWA formal bodies

Due to lack of resources, both in terms of financial and human resources as explained above not much progress could be made regarding the implementation of this part of the Communication Strategy with exception of activity 1.2. as reported below.

#### Activity 1.2 Interactivity in-between meetings

One of the first steps that the Secretariat wants to take is to establish designated web pages on the AEWA Technical and Standing Committee on its public website. In this section, members of both Committees will be introduced, background and contact information of each member will be made available and information regarding regional representation will be found. Also a start will be made to report back on meetings on the website, including on decisions taken and on future meetings. Furthermore it is planned to organise a first coordination meeting in November 2006 between the Executive Secretary, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee and the Chair of the Technical Committee and to report back on this to Parties on the website and in the Newsletter.

### **External communication**

*Objective 2: to strengthen and/or develop mechanisms for effective external communication & cooperation between and among the AEWA stakeholders and the AEWA Secretariat.*

The activities foreseen under this heading in the Communication Strategy are:

- 2.1 Regional Meetings (West Africa and East Africa)
- 2.2 A feasibility study regarding establishing exchange centres for AEWA
- 2.3 Engage ambassadors to stimulate other Range States to become Contracting Parties focussing in 2006 on Russia, Baltic States, Central Asia and Africa.

Unfortunately funds are lacking to implement activity 2.1 and 2.2. Regarding activity 2.3. we could mention that OMPO has taken up the role as Ambassador and is promoting the Agreement particularly in the Baltic States, Russia, Malta and Morocco. Also BirdLife International and Wetlands International are whenever appropriate promoting the Agreement. In past and present particularly the Wetlands International Office in Dakar is actively supporting us. On a regular basis the Executive Secretary has contracts with these NGOs to inform them on the recruitment of Parties and to encourage them to continue with their support. Until recently our regional representative within the TC from Central Asia has been our 'ambassador' in that region. Meanwhile unfortunately she immigrated to Canada. It should be mentioned here that no budget is available to cover travel and subsistence costs related to ambassadorship.

### **Capacity building**

*Objective 3: to build regional capacity for communication*

The activities foreseen under this heading in the Communication Strategy are:

- 3.1 Training of Trainers at the regional level focussing in 2006 on West Africa and East Africa
- 3.2 Facilitate follow-up on ToT at the national level

So far no activities have been undertaken to implement these two activities due to lack of resources. However as indicated in the Communication Strategy we will consider a joint action plan with the African-Eurasian GEF Flyways Project. The implementation of this project just started in July 2006.

### **AEWA awareness raising**

*Objective 4: to increase knowledge and awareness of AEWA, its added value and its objectives*

The activities foreseen under this heading in the Communication Strategy are:

- 4.1. Improve and maintain the AEWA Website
- 4.2. Regular publication of the AEWA Newsletter
- 4.3. Initiate and provide the infrastructure for e-discussion
- 4.4. Develop guidelines for accession
- 4.5. Develop a set of resource materials for awareness raising at the national level

#### Activity 4.1: Improve and maintain the AEWA Website

In 2005 the AEWA Website has been revamped. Since entering on duty of the Junior Professional Officer the website is kept up-to-date and regularly news of activities and/ or projects has been uploaded.

It is expected that with the implementation of the GEF project some features of the AEWA website will be improved further e.g. the Internet Mapping System (IMS). Furthermore AEWA has participated in a meeting of MEAs to discuss knowledge management and the outcome of this meeting is that UNEP on behalf of the MEAs is requested to fund a knowledge management project. On behalf of the RAMSAR Convention, CBD, CMS and AEWA the final project proposal has been forwarded by CITES to UNEP. If UNEP approves this project and makes the necessary resources available work could start on improving access to AEWA's strategic documents on its website.

#### Activity 4.2: Regular publication of the AEWA Newsletter

Since MOP3 on a monthly basis a HTML E-News letter has been sent out. We are currently looking at a computer program that will allow us to send this Newsletter automatically out to all the 2200 entries in our address database.

In due course the special Newsletter on MOP3 will be published. Also drafting of a regular issue of the Newsletter is ongoing and it is expected that this could be published end of 2006. The Secretariat would like to encourage Contracting Parties, Range States and Organisations to provide us with information which could be included in the regular Newsletter. The regular Newsletter is a tool for the dissemination of information from all involved in the conservation of Migratory Waterbirds.

Unfortunately due to particularly human resources the Secretariat will not be in the position to published two regular issues of the AEWA Newsletter in 2006.

#### Activity 4.3: Initiate and provide the infrastructure for e-discussion

One of the task of the Information Assistant that hopefully could enter on duty as of 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2006 will be to improve the current address database and to establish an email list. This list will be used for distribution of the E-news and to inform addressees about any changes on the website.

No progress has been made on establishing an e-discussion forum due to lack of resources.

#### Activity 4.4: Develop guideline for accession

These guidelines for accession were drafted in 2004. By the end of that year the Secretariat was in the position due to the generous support of the government of Luxembourg to translate and print these guidelines which are originally in English into Russian, Arabic and French. Since then the guideline for accession has been distributed on a regular basis to countries that are in the process to accede to AEWA.

#### Activity 4.5: Develop a set of resource materials for awareness raising at the national level.

As soon as the Information Assistant will join the Agreement Secretariat one of the tasks will be to develop a toolkit. All ingredients with exception of a power point presentation on AEWA to fill this toolkit are available. As soon this is ready the Information Unit within the Agreement Secretariat will start to prepare a distribution strategy.

#### ***AEWA Reader***

A Reader on AEWA; which aims to increase the understanding of AEWA and its underlying concepts has been compiled some years ago. So far we did not have the capacity to finalise it. Meanwhile some of the information included is out of date and therefore all text has to be reviewed. It is expected that this could be done in coming months and that early 2007 this Reader could be published.

#### ***10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Calendar***

By the end of 2005 the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Calendar was published. For this Calendar Mr Yves Fagnart provided to us free of charge pictures of his watercolour paintings. The paintings were used for the AEWA exhibition in Museum Koenig; which was opened by the former Minister of Environment and Nuclear Safety of Germany Mr. Jürgen Trittin on 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2005 to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AEWA.

#### ***DVD on AEWA***

One of the activities although not mentioned in the Communication Strategy is the development of a DVD on AEWA. At MOP3 the second part of the AEWA DVD, develop by a consortium of Fiction Film

and Musch & Tinbergen, was presented. Although the idea is to shoot a large amount of footages in coming years to be used for promotion of the Agreement, lack of sufficient resources are hampering the implementation of this idea. Therefore it is hoped that the African-Eurasian GEF Flyways Project; in which the development of DVD on AEWA has also be integrated, will provide ample opportunities to continue work on developing this DVD in future.

### **WMBD DVD**

A small grant has been made available by AEWA to support the development of a DVD of the main launching event of the World Migratory Bird Day in 2006. It is expected that we receive the final version in due course. Ms Kuki Gallmann reached agreement with Kenyan Airlines for showing this DVD on intercontinental flights. If this materializes this would be again a good outreach opportunity.

### Other activities linked to awareness raising

#### ***World Migratory Bird Day***

The AEWA Secretariat took the initiative to launch the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) on 9<sup>th</sup> of April in Kenya. This idea came up during a meeting the Executive Secretary and the Junior Professional Officer had in November 2005 with Mrs. Kuki Gallmann. The latter is well known for her novels such as 'I dreamed of Africa' and 'African nights' and showed great interest for this idea. As founder of the Great Rift valley Trust she offered her support to organise a cultural and artistic event called WINGS to mark the first World Migratory Bird Day. The launch was a great success in terms of high level participation, media coverage but also regarding outreach to the general public. For World Migratory Bird Day 2006, 68 registered activities in 46 countries took place. As Secretariat we managed in a time frame of not more than 4 months to organise the launch of WMBD, to establish a special website ([www.worldmigratorybirdday.com](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.com)) and to raise the necessary co-funding for the WINGS event. The Secretariat is very grateful for the financial support to WMBD given by Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife Partner –The Netherlands) and the Dutch Embassy in Kenya. Preparations are underway for celebrations of WMBD in 2007. Meanwhile contact has been established with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service which have been organising the International Migratory Bird Day since 1993 in the western hemisphere (primarily Canada and the USA). The launch of WMBD has attracted their interest and agreement has been reached that for next year we will have a common theme being 'Climate Change and its impact on Migratory Birds'.

The AEWA Secretariat will continue to organise WMBD for the next few years but is already looking for possibilities to find a long-term solution for the establishment of a self supporting WMBD Secretariat. The idea is that this Secretariat will be steered by a consortium existing of at least Birdlife International, USFWS, CMS and AEWA.

#### ***Public events***

The AEWA Secretariat participated in the following events:

- Vogelfestival (Birdfair) in Lelystad, The Netherlands (26-27 August 2006)
- 100 Jahre staatlicher Naturschutz - 28. Deutscher Naturschutztag 2006 in Bonn, Germany (1 June 2006)
- Initiative Toleranz in Bonn, Germany (2 September 2006)
- UN Day in Bonn, Germany (21 October 2006)

During these public events we informed visitors to our stand about our work. It was noted that the general public is not well aware of the fact that the United Nations is also involved in the conservation of migratory species. Over one thousand of our flyway posters and hundreds of AEWA stickers/ pins/ calendars/ brochures were handed out to interested visitors.