



FIFTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

24 – 25 June 2008, Bonn, Germany

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article VIII, Paragraph (h) of the Agreement, the Secretariat shall prepare, on an annual basis and for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, reports on the work of the Secretariat and on the implementation of the Agreement. In addition to this, the Secretariat has decided to report back to each meeting of the Technical and Standing Committees (TC, StC). It has been agreed by both Committees that a common report will be produced for both meetings. However, it has also been agreed, that for each meeting, the report will be updated to reflect the actual situation. Depending on the intervals between these meetings, the reports could differ slightly.

This report is divided into four sections:

1. General management; which includes policy/ administrative/ financial and human resources issues and cooperation with other organisations;
2. Information management;
3. Implementation and compliance;
4. Project development.

The day-to-day work of the Agreement Secretariat, which includes responding to incoming mails, maintaining our extensive network, internal meetings with CMS, UNEP and/or UN Head of Agencies etc. are not specifically mentioned in this report.

The current report is based on the period since StC 4 which took place from 20 -21 November 2006 in Bonn, Germany.

1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Development of Strategic Plan

In accordance with Resolution 3.9. the Standing Committee was instructed to prepare a Strategic Plan for the Agreement in close cooperation with the Technical Committee. The Secretariat contracted a Consultant to draft this Strategic Plan and the process was kicked off via a brainstorming session during the 4th meeting of the Standing Committee in 2006. The Strategic Plan was drafted in close consultation with the AEWA Secretariat. Early 2007 a workshop was held at the UN premises in Bonn to review and discuss the first draft of the Strategic Plan with TC working group 5. During this workshop the proposed new National Reporting format was compared and aligned with the Strategic Plan. Based on the outcomes of this workshop the draft Strategic Plan was amended and submitted to the Standing Committee and later to the Contracting Parties for comments. *It is envisaged that the final draft will be submitted to MOP4 for adoption.*

New Developments

Some developments are taking place within the AEWA region, which are of great interest for the future of the Agreement:

CMS launched the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Action Plan on 14th of January 2008. CAF covers 30 Range States of which 16 are located within the AEWA Agreement Area. Also half of the populations listed in this Action Plan are already covered by AEWA. *There will be a need to look into a cooperation scheme with CAF to avoid duplication of efforts and also to avoid competition between the two instruments, potentially leading to confusion among AEWA-CAF Range States.*

The second issue of interest is the development of a Memorandum of Understanding for the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory raptors and owls. In 2007 the first meeting took place to discuss and adopt the Action Plan to be linked to this MoU. Later this year the second meeting will take place to conclude the MoU. In this case, there is also a need to look into how AEWA could cooperate with this MoU and how competition between the two instruments could be avoided. All 118 AEWA Range States are also Range States to this MoU which stretches to the coast of China and encompasses many more countries. *Again, there is a need to look into how AEWA could cooperate with this MoU and how competition between the two instruments could be avoided.*

Several Range States have indicated that the growing number of instruments to conserve migratory birds will not lead to a substantial increase of funds to implement these treaties. It is likely that this means, in practice, that more or less the same amount of funds currently available will have to be shared amongst a growing number of specialized bird Agreements/MoUs.

Fundraising

At the last Meeting of Parties it was decided to more or less flesh out all activities from the core budget. Besides its decision that the core budget should only be covered by the annual contribution MOP3 also decided to establish two additional pillars, namely one dealing with activities and the other one with travel costs of funded delegates. The Secretariat noted that raising funds for meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Agreement poses additional and persisting challenges. Due to the fact that no funds could be secured for the 5th Standing Committee meeting in 2007 due to time shortage, the decision had to be taken to postpone that meeting to mid-2008. *It is questionable if meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Agreement should depend on voluntary contributions and the Secretariat will raise this point at the next MOP.*

Since MOP3 a total amount of € 808,593 has been received in the form of voluntary contributions. Approximately € 129,000 was allocated to activities of the CMS-led Avian Influenza Task Force. The remaining funds were earmarked for International Implementation Priority projects and for meetings of the Technical and/ or Standing Committee.

As agreed by the Contracting Parties at MOP2 as well as at MOP3 the Secretariat was allowed to set aside the first annual contribution of new Parties to cover the costs for ongoing activities and the launching of new initiatives. In 2006 and 2007 a total amount of €264,000 was received from new Parties. For 2008 the estimated total amount will be approximately €150,000. The Standing Committee agreed to allocate these funds for *inter alia*: the drafting of international reviews, in financial support to the GEF flyway project, the development, coordination and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans, consultancies including surveys, implementation of the Communication Strategy, and organisation of MOP4. The funds received through this mechanism were effectively used and have been proven to be crucial for the successful implementation of the Agreement. As agreed at MOP3 this mechanism will be stopped at MOP4. So this will mean that fewer funds will be available for the implementation in the near future, unless Contracting Parties are willing to increase their annual assessed and/ or voluntary contributions.

The amount needed to fully implement the International Implementation Priorities (IIP) 2006 – 2008 totals €5,2 million. Based on this figure, the Secretariat was only able to secure approximately 10 percent of the total amount needed. As indicated earlier, one of the main reasons that Contracting Parties were not in a position to fully support the implementation of the Agreement is the economic recess they are confronted with. This has led to severe cuttings in their budgets which has an (in)direct impact on the level of support they could provide to the AEWA Secretariat.

The Secretariat is very grateful for the financial support received since MOP3. It should however be noted that the level of support is significantly lower than initially estimated. The latter has a negative impact especially on the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project. WOW currently requires an additional 1 million Euros in funding for full project implementation. When drafting the WOW project proposal in 2003-2004, it was foreseen that AEWA would be in the position to contribute an amount of US \$ 1.3 million to this project over a period of 5 years. This amount was based on the assumptions that (1) an amount of US \$ 150,000 is available for the implementation of IIPs per year, (2) additional contributions in cash of US \$ 50,000 are secured per year, and (3) the remaining US \$ 300,000 are provided “in kind” through technical support and allocated staff time at the Secretariat. Due to the losses caused by the US-dollar exchange rate it was decided at the start of the project to reduce the duration of the project from 5 to 4 years. This means that AEWA as a main contributor to the WOW project is faced with a highly challenging timeframe for fundraising in addition to our existing responsibilities within this project. *The question is how to manage to get the missing funds in place while avoiding unnecessary delays in the implementation of the project.* During the last WOW Steering Committee Meeting (January 2008), Wetlands International proposed to contract a Consultant to draft a fundraising strategy, which could be used to approach some of the possible donors. The Steering Committee agrees that *the partners involved in this project should combine their efforts to ensure that the missing funds will come in as soon as possible.*

In addition to the need for fundraising for IIP 2006 – 2008 and the WOW project, as a matter of priority, we also have to fundraise an amount of €200,000 for the organisation of MOP4 in Madagascar. In the months to come this will take quite some staff time, particularly that of the Executive Secretary, to secure the necessary funds for MOP4.

In view of the magnitude and diversity of financial needs, as well as the urgency of acquisition, fundraising-related support would be welcomed and is highly encouraged.

Recruitment of Staff

Fixed-term staff

In Resolution 3.14 the Contracting Parties agreed to establish the post of an Information Assistant and the post of a Secretary/ Team Assistant as of 1st of July 2006, both on a part-time basis. As of 1st of December 2006 Ms. Dunia Sforzin (German/Italian) joined the team as Information Assistant. One month later Mrs. Jolanta Kremer (British) entered on duty as Team Assistant.

Temporary staff

With the growing number of Contracting Parties and the fact that AEWA is becoming more and more well-known, the Secretariat is facing a steady increase in workload. To cope with this increase, the Standing Committee agreed to extend the contract of our Programme Officer (L-2), Ms. Catherine Lehmann (French/German), until 31 December 2008. Her main tasks are/have been to draft a number of international reviews, to support the work of the AEWA Information Unit and last but not least to organise the logistical arrangements for MOP4.

Interns

In close cooperation with Mr. Henning Lilge (CMS Administrative Assistant and Coordinator for the Interns Programme) the following interns have supported the work of the AEWA Secretariat:

Name	Nationality	Main tasks carried out in the period ¹
Ms. Sophie Caruana	French	To assist with administrative issues (6 Nov. – 15 Dec. '06)
Mr. Andreas Steger	German	To assist with the finalisation of the Conservation Guidelines on National Legislation (1 Dec. '06 – 16 Feb. '07)
Ms. Carolin Bongert	German	To assist with drafting TC documents (8 Jan. – 13 April '07)
Ms Zohra Hamidi	Afghan	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2007 (8 Jan. – 21 March '07)
Mr. Johannes Müller	German	To assist with the preparation of international reviews (March-August '07)
Ms. Pilar Cossio	Peruvian/ Australian	To assist with information-related work and preparations for WMBD 2008 (1 Oct. – 21 Dec. '07)
Ms. Arpine Jenderedjian	Armenian	To assist with revising the Guidelines on mitigating the impact of aquatic weeds on waterbird habitats (17 Oct. '07 – 31 Jan. '08)
Ms. Samar Gholmié	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 (7 Jan. – April '08)
Mr. Johannes Schramm	German	To assist with the development of the TC Forum and WMBD 2008 website (15 Jan. – 15 April '08)
Mr. Mackenzie Masaki	Kenyan	To assist with drafting a leaflet on the Great Rift Valley (11 Jan. – 1 March '08)
Ms. Nickoletta Kolumburda	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 (7 Jan. – April '08)
Ms. Lea Koeder	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 and organisation of side event/ exhibition during CBD COP. (4 April – 15 June 2008)

Recruitment of Parties

During the discussion regarding the Communication Strategy it became clear that the view of several Contracting Parties and organisations is that the Secretariat should pay less attention to the recruitment of Parties and more to the implementation of the Agreement. The Secretariat has taken note of this and has therefore put a stronger focus on the implementation of the Agreement. In the day-to-day situation it had been noted that many Range States lack information to start the process of becoming a Party to the Agreement. The Secretariat has provided these countries with adequate and timely responses and encouragement. In 2006 six countries have joined, followed by one in 2007. Taken these figures into account there might be a scope for re-focussing our efforts on Party recruitment. However, the Secretariat has been informed by a number of countries that they have started the process of joining the Agreement and it is hoped that in the months to come some of them will finalise their internal procedures and will join the Agreement. Besides the Secretariat, the organisation 'Oiseaux migrateurs du paléarctique` (OMPO) as well as Wetlands International and the wider WOW project team have played a role in winning new Range States to join AEWA, for which we are very grateful.

Cooperation with other Organisations

In early 2008 a Memorandum of Cooperation was concluded between OMPO and the AEWA Secretariat. This MoC formalises a strong existing cooperation with a long-standing tradition. In addition to the active role OMPO has been playing as an observer to the AEWA Technical Committee for the last 6 years, it has also continuously supported the recruitment of Parties to AEWA and enhanced the implementation of AEWA through its scientific and monitoring programmes on migratory birds in the Baltic States, Ukraine, Belarus, the Russian Federation as well as Western Africa.

A second MoC between the CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna) and the AEWA Secretariat is under preparation. Particularly the work of the so-called CBird working group (Circumpolar Seabird Group) is of interest for AEWA. It is foreseen that this MoC could be concluded by the end of 2008/ early 2009.

¹ Besides these main tasks all temporary staff supported the Secretariat in its work.

2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Since the arrival of the Information Officer (JPO) in late 2005 and of the Information Assistant one year later, substantial progress has been made regarding the overall information management of the Secretariat.

However, Information Management is not only restricted to these two Officers, but has in fact grown to involve all Secretariat staff. Each staff member has a specific role in this respect and - through this collective effort - Information Management within the Secretariat has evolved into a team effort.

Before reporting on the main activities it might be good to explain the somewhat complicated task and time division of the Information Officer post. The latter is available for 30 percent of his time only for the coordination of the information management within the AEWA Secretariat. In addition to his work for AEWA, 50 percent of his time is earmarked for his role as Communication Officer for the Wings Over Wetlands project and the remaining 20 percent to support the CMS Family in communication and information management work.

Hence, the time that the Information Officer can actually spend on purely AEWA Secretariat issues is very limited and in reality not sufficient to deal with the wide spectrum of information management properly. To compensate for this it was decided to divide some of the tasks among other team members.

Newsletter/ E-news

The Electronic Newsletter, recommended in the Communication Strategy, has been sent out at regular two-monthly intervals. The aim of the AEWA E-Newsletter is to provide readers with a regular and short digest of selective news coming from the AEWA Secretariat. Currently the E-Newsletter is sent out to over 2,000 people and new subscribers are joining via an online registration system on a weekly basis. The E-Newsletter has evolved into one of the main communication tools available to the Secretariat and its production always involves the entire Secretariat team.

Unfortunately, due to lack of capacity, the Secretariat was not able to publish the regular AEWA Newsletter as often as planned. The 11th AEWA Newsletter has, however, been recently published and the Secretariat now has both the capacity and tools in place for a regular production of this print resource.

Websites

AEWA website (www.unep-aewa.org)

Since MOP3 good progress has been made in regularly updating the AEWA website. Currently, at least once a week, particularly the news section is being updated and the usage statistics show that the AEWA news page is one of the most visited resources on the AEWA website. In addition, some changes have been made to make some hidden resources, like the AEWA Conservation Guidelines, more accessible to visitors. Furthermore, a new interactive and password-protected area for members of the Technical Committee is under preparation. This new "TC communication platform" currently under development is meant to facilitate and enhance the exchange of information between TC members.

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) website (www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)

The centre of the annual WMBD campaign is the WMBD website. Since 2006, the AEWA Secretariat has taken the lead in developing this online resource. Each year a small team of interns, working under the supervision of the AEWA Information Officer, help develop and customize the WMBD website to fit the annually selected theme. The team for 2008 consists of Ms. Nickoletta Kolumburda, Ms. Samar Gholmié and Mr. Johannes Schramm and the theme for 2008 is: '*Migratory Birds - Ambassadors for biodiversity*'.

AIWEb - website (www.aiweb.info)

In 2006 a designated website for the International Task Force on Avian Influenza was designed and developed by the AEWA Information Officer in close collaboration with the Internet Division at UNEP/DCPI. Currently the website is maintained by CMS, while some limited support is provided by the Information Officer to help maintain it.

Wings Over Wetlands website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org)

In his capacity as Communication Officer for the Wings over Wetlands Project, the AEWA Information Officer has also been assigned with the development of a standalone website for the WOW project. Although the website will be hosted by Wetlands International, the view of the key Partners of this project is that this site should have a design that shows that this project is not owned by any one of the Partners but is a real Partnership project consisting of UNEP, UNOPS, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, the Ramsar Secretariat and the AEWA Secretariat. Unfortunately it took several design proposals and a Steering Committee meeting until a consensus on the final website design was reached. However, the latest design proposal made by the AEWA Information Officer has now been accepted by all partners and the WOW website will be launched very soon.

AFRING website (www.afring.org)

The AEWA Information Officer has been given the task of setting up a designated website for AFRING. The website will be developed and hosted by AEWA and regularly maintained by Mr Doug Harebottle at the (ADU). The AFRING project is being sponsored by the EC.

Posters

In 2006, 2007 and 2008 customized World Migratory Bird Day posters were designed and printed by the Secretariat. Currently a poster on the Sociable Lapwing and one on the Madagascar Pond Heron are under preparation to be distributed at MOP4.

Pros and cons brochure

A brochure to explain the pros and cons of joining AEWA has been drafted. Currently the text is being internally layouted and will be printed in the foreseeable future.

World Migratory Bird Day 2007 and 2008

After the launch of World Migratory Bird Day in 2006 the event has quickly gained international momentum and acceptance. In 2007, a total of 107 events took place in 58 countries. The drawing competition held in 2007 was also a great success. In total 157 drawings were received and the twelve best pictures were selected. Three of them received an award. WMBD 2008 was celebrated on 10-11 May and the theme is: '*Migratory Birds - Ambassadors for Biodiversity*'. WMBD is a common CMS-AEWA activity; however AEWA has the lead in the development of the WMBD website and the overall coordination of its outreach activities. In 2008 a total of 59 countries participated with over 130 different events.

Book on Black-tailed Godwit

To commemorate the 15th Anniversary of AEWA in 2010 a special book on the Black-tailed Godwit will be launched. In 2006 we agreed on a collaboration with Mr. Yves Fagniat, a watercolour painter from Belgium, who will provide his paintings free of charge while AEWA will take care of the text. The target group for this book, which aims to raise awareness about AEWA but also on the threats the Black-tailed Godwit is facing, will be the general public.

Technical Series

Nr: Title:

- 14 International Single Species Action Plan for the Maccoa Duck (*Oxyura maccoa*)
- 13 Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area
- 12 Guideline on the avoidance of introduction of non-native Waterbird species
- 11 International Single Species Action Plan for the Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*)
- 10 International Single Species Action Plan for the Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*)
- 9 International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Corncrake (*Crex crex*)
- 8 International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)
- 7 International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)

The International Single Species Action Plans mentioned under Technical Series No. 7, 8 and 9 are common CMS/AEWA Action Plans.

Other publications

- Brochure 'How you could support the implementation of AEWA' (In English and French)
- Proceedings MOP3 (in hardcopy and CD-Rom format) (In English and French)
- Special Newsletter on the outcomes of MOP3 (In English and French)
- Leaflet 'Avian Influenza and Wild Birds' (In English/ French/ Spanish/ Arabic and Russian)
- Special Newsletter on Non-toxic Shot (In Russian)

Development of online National Reporting System

With the financial support of Norway, UNEP contracted UNEP-WCMC to work on strengthening the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions through the strategic use of information/knowledge management among UNEP administered MEAs. One of the expected outcomes will be a portal which will provide easy access to strategic documents of all participating MEAs and focal point information for e.g. CBD, CMS, Ramsar and/ or AEWA in a specific country. Also we expect that the portal will make it possible to inquire which resolution/ decision under which MEA has been taken in relation to a specific issue (e.g. invasive species). In addition to the portal, it was also agreed that online reporting systems would be developed for some of the MEAs. The AEWA Secretariat has been involved in this project from the very beginning and was able to convince UNEP that the project proposal would also include the development of an online system for National Reports for CMS and AEWA. The AEWA Secretariat has been working very closely with UNEP-WCMC, which is responsible for implementing the project for UNEP. The development of this system is well underway and it is expected that the final draft could be presented to MOP4 and, if adopted, could be used for future reporting.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

Contracting Parties are responsible and involved in the implementation of and compliance with the provision laid down in the Agreement. Their National Reports will provide the necessary information to enable an assessment on progress made in this respect. However, the Agreement Secretariat is partly responsible and also involved in the implementation and/ or compliance of the Agreement. Hereafter you will find information on the role of the Secretariat in this respect.

International Implementation Priorities 2006 – 2008

In document StC 5.27 you will find detailed information on the current status of the implementation of the IIP 2006 – 2008. As already mentioned above, a total amount of € 5.2 million would be needed for the full implementation of AEWA's IIP 2006-2008. So far approximately only 10 percent has been secured. Nevertheless taking into account the limited means available, good progress has been made in the implementation of the IIPs. From the 36 listed IIP projects the Secretariat contracted out 8 projects which have been implemented or are currently being implemented. 15 additional projects are directly linked to the WOW project and some of these projects are currently being implemented by WOW. This means that if we manage to secure the last missing €1 million for the WOW project all these 15 IIP projects planned to be implemented by WOW could be actually be realized. These 15 IIP projects together with the 8 IIP projects already contracted out by the Secretariat would make a total of 23 implemented projects, which corresponds to 64 percent of the IIP. To date no funds could be secured for the remaining 13 projects.

African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project/ WOW project

In early 2006 the United Nations Office for Project Support (UNOPS), being the executing agency, started the recruitment process for the staff for the Project Coordination Unit (PCU). The latter is based at the office of Wetland International in Wageningen, the Netherlands. In July 2006 two staff members for this PCU entered on duty and started to work on the implementation of this full-size GEF project. The official name of the project changed from UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian GEF Flyways Project to *Wings Over Wetlands* (WOW). Since establishment of the PCU very good progress has been made in the implementation of the WOW project. However as indicated earlier we are facing financial problems in the sense that not all funds are in place to fully implement this project. Moreover due to the loss of the purchase power of the US Dollar the duration of the project was reduced from 5 years to 4 years.

The AEWA Secretariat is strongly involved in this project, as our Information Officer is spending 50 percent of his time as Communication Officer for this project and the Executive Secretary is also a member of the Steering Committee. So far the Steering Committee has met twice. Despite the serious financial problems we are facing regarding the project at the moment the AEWA Secretariat hopes that if we make a common effort the funds could be secured and the project fully implemented before 2010. More information will be provided during the StC meeting.

Lesser White-fronted Goose

In early 2007 the Secretariat decided to visit Finland, Sweden, Norway and Germany in order to discuss the problems with the finalisation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose Single Species Action Plan arising from disagreement over the re-introduction of the species in Fennoscandia. It was clear that without reaching a consensus on this issue no progress could be made in finalising the International Single Species Action Plan for the LwF Goose. Meanwhile preliminary consensus has been reached, which needs to be closely monitored and strengthened. For 2008 Norway decided to allocate funds for contracting a staff member who would work at the AEWA Secretariat and coordinate the implementation of this Action Plan. As of February 2008, Ms. Kirsten Martin (German) entered on duty as Coordinator. It is hoped that in the months to come progress will be made to finalise the Action Plan and to start its implementation. Particular focus will be given to the wild Russian population that migrates through Kazakhstan and is suffering from the hunting pressure in that area. Meanwhile the 1st meeting of the Committee on Captive breeding and supplementation of Lesser White-fronted Geese in Fennoscandia took place on 7-8 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany.

Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds

AEWA is one of the founding members of the Task Force on Avian Influenza (AI) and Wild Birds. This Task Force was established after the outbreak of AI in west Siberia in July 2005. The Task Force is led by CMS and the AEWA Secretariat is closely involved in it. Our Information Officer has helped to produce

both the Nairobi Seminar CD-ROM & AIWEB – the designated website for the international Task Force. This website is currently being maintained by CMS.

Furthermore, the Technical Officer and the Executive Secretary are involved in providing substantial input to the discussions taking place within the Task Force and regarding the drafting of information material by the Coordinator of the Task Force. The AEWA Secretariat participated in the Avian Influenza and Wildlife Workshop ‘Practical Lessons Learned’, which took place from 26-27 June 2007 in Aviemore, Scotland. After this workshop the AEWA Information Officer produced a CD-resource containing the report of the meeting and all workshop presentations.

Advisory missions

It is a fact that at many places migratory waterbirds face serious threats. Most of these threats are caused by human activities. Since StC4 we have been confronted with developments regarding wind farms, soda ash extraction and bio-fuels. In 2007 the Secretariat has been approached by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention as well as by the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention with the request to participate in advisory missions to Bulgaria and Tanzania respectively. It is for the first time ever that the AEWA Secretariat has participated in this type of mission and this is an indication of our standing amongst other MEAs and that our specific role in conflicts such as these, which are of common interest, is appreciated.

Lake Natron in Tanzania

The Secretariat, in close cooperation with CMS, played an active role in the discussion of the plans of the Government of Tanzania, under a joint venture with TATA, to develop a soda ash extraction facility near Lake Natron. The Secretariat participated in the Ramsar Advisory Mission, also on behalf of CMS, to discuss the possible negative effect that these developments might have on the breeding colony of the Lesser Flamingo with stakeholders involved. Lake Natron is the only breeding site for the Lesser Flamingo in East Africa.

Windfarm developments in Bulgaria

Plans for several wind farms to be erected along the Black Sea coast within the so-called Via Pontica migration route are currently under development. These coincide with one of the major migratory routes for many species of migratory birds. In 2005 the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention decided to open a file regarding these developments. At its meeting in 2006 the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention discussed this issue again and decided to send an appraisal mission to assess the possible impact these future wind farms might have on migratory birds. The Bern Convention Secretariat invited the AEWA Secretariat to participate in this mission. It was agreed that AEWA would also represent CMS during this visit. Based on the discussions we had with all stakeholders the independent expert Prof. Eckhart Kuijken from Belgium drafted a report which was tabled at the last Bern Convention Standing Committee meeting in 2007.

Tana Delta in Kenya

A new problem is emerging in the Tana River Delta in Kenya. The plan is to use 20,000 hectares of wetlands located along this delta for the sugar cane plantation. The sugar cane will be used for the production of bio-fuels. The Secretariat is following these developments and tries to collect more information about the exact plans.

International reviews

In accordance with paragraph 7.4 of the AEWA Action Plan the Agreement Secretariat, in coordination with the Technical Committee and the Parties, shall prepare a series of international reviews necessary for the implementation of this Action Plan including:

- a) reports on the status and trends of populations;
- b) gaps in information from surveys;

- c) the networks of sites used by each population, including reviews of the protection status of each site as well as the management measures taken in each case;
- d) pertinent hunting and trade legislation in each country relating to the species listed in Annex 2 to this Agreement;
- e) the stage of preparation and implementation of single species action plans;
- f) re-establishment projects; and
- g) the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof.

Apart from these reviews the Meeting of the Parties requested to review the experiences of those countries that have phased out, or are endeavouring to phase, the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands and to review the use of non-toxic shot for waterbird hunting at its second and third session through adoption of Resolution 2.2 and 3.11.

The Secretariat accomplished the reviews linked to Resolution 2.2 and 3.11 and also the ones mentioned under d) on pertinent hunting and trade legislation. The Programme Officer, with support of an intern, spent a lot of time on collecting the required information from Parties and Organisations, primarily by means of questionnaires. The review on hunting and trade legislation as well as the review on the use of non-toxic shot for waterbird hunting have been submitted to the TC for comments and was discussed at the TC8 meeting. The review on experiences made in countries that have phased out or are endeavouring to phase out the use of lead shot is in its final stage of preparation and will be circulated for consultation intersessionally.

Although the Action Plan states in paragraph 7.5 that the Agreement Secretariat shall endeavour to ensure that the reviews mentioned in paragraph 7.4 are updated at intervals of not more than three years, we noted that this might not be supported by the Contracting Parties. It is clear that the preparation of such reviews can only take place with the input of the Parties. However, the compilation of all these reviews within the same period of time leads to numerous questionnaires which all have to be filled out by Contracting Parties, and often one and the same focal point within a Ministry. In order to avoid such a concentration of additional workload imposed on the Contracting Parties the Secretariat proposes amending the Action Plan in a way which avoids the Parties having to provide updated information on all mentioned reviews every three years, which constitutes a frequency for which there is no real need.

From the list above a, e, f and g have been contracted out. In the same way as we did, these contractors also encountered problems in receiving information from the Contracting Parties.

The reviews mentioned under b and c are part of the WOW project and will be available in 2010. All other reviews will be ready in time for submission to MOP4.

Through these reviews a wealth of information has become available, which could be used to further improve the implementation of the Agreement. Nearly all these reviews have led to draft Resolutions which will be discussed at StC54 meeting before they will be submitted to MOP4 for adoption.

Workshop to promote sustainable hunting

The AEWA Secretariat participated in the second workshop, which was organised in the framework of the BirdLife's LIFE project on Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean Third Countries and which was co-funded by the AEWA Secretariat. The workshop, which took place in Amman, Jordan in May 2007 was a good opportunity to raise awareness on AEWA. One day of the 2-day workshop was, moreover, entirely dedicated to the lead shot issue containing a theoretical and practical shooting session.

4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

With the Programme Officer entering on duty, the AEWA Secretariat has more capacity to work on concrete project proposals which would support the implementation of the Agreement. Particularly foundations and agencies focusing on bilateral and multilateral development cooperation (e.g. national development cooperation agencies in Europe) will be contacted by AEWA with proposals for medium to large-scale projects. Currently, the Secretariat is collecting information about respective funding requirements and considers aspects such as the necessary terminology for project conceptualisation. As the AEWA Secretariat we are still in a learning phase of closely connecting our projects to the objectives of sustainable development and/ or poverty alleviation. *Supporting recommendations by the StC would be welcomed and considered.*

In 2007 initial contacts were made with Developing Cooperation Agencies within Europe. So far only one very positive response was received from the Spanish Developing Cooperation Agency (AECI). This response has led to the development of the following project, preliminary called Wetcap.

Wetcap

After receiving a promising response from AECI steps have been taken to meet and discuss the possibilities of future cooperation. This discussion has led to the development of a project proposal called 'Wetcap', which focuses on the North African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). The project proposal as such is still in an initial phase and will primarily focus on capacity building and awareness-raising activities in implementation of the relevant MEAs, not at least AEWA. Comments received from AECI, BirdLife International and Wetlands International are currently being incorporated into the draft proposal which is foreseen to be submitted to AECI before the summer break. It is for the first time ever that the AEWA Secretariat has developed a project proposal to be submitted to a Development Cooperation Agency. The total budget requested will be roundabout €1.5 million.

Great Rift Valley

In 2007 a scientific workshop took place in Nairobi to discuss the possible nomination of the whole Great Rift Valley (GRV) as World Heritage Site. The full extent of the Great Rift Valley is just over 7,000 kilometers; it is lauded as the cradle of mankind and has the distinction of having in it an extremely rich reserve of natural and cultural sites. Being the longest Rift on Earth it is a phenomenon of great importance not only to its inhabitants but also to humanity as a whole. It crosses over 20 different countries namely: South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, Palestine and Jordan through to Syria. In each of these countries the Great Rift Valley is of great significance to the countries economy and an integral part of their culture. The GRV is also one of the major routes for migratory birds. The latter is the reason why we decided to participate in this workshop. It was decided to establish a Steering Committee in which the AEWA Secretariat will also participate as advisor. We, for our part, promised to draft a brochure on the GRV and a draft Resolution to be tabled at the biodiversity-related Conventions starting with the AEWA MOP4. The text for the brochure has been drafted and was sent out for comments to some participants of the Nairobi meeting. The AEWA Secretariat has made contact with individual Contracting Parties and the impression we have is that some of them would be willing to provide some funds for the conservation of the GRV in the long term. Depending on the means we will have after MOP4, a concrete project proposal could be drafted for the GRV.