



FIFTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
24 – 25 June 2008, Bonn, Germany

**OVERVIEW ON THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AEWA
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**
(As of 1 June 2008)

INTRODUCTION

At its third session, which took place from 23-27 October 2005 in Senegal, the Meeting of the Parties adopted the Communication Strategy for AEWA under Resolution 3.10. 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 and to develop it 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 4th 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 Centres for their region, as stipulated in the Communication Strategy;
7. *Further encourages* all representatives of Contracting Parties and partner organisations to envisage functioning as ambassadors 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, particularly of 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 the German Government, 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 to enable the Secretariat to produce new outreach materials.

This report will inform you about the progress made by the Agreement Secretariat so far in the implementation of the Communication Strategy since MOP3. 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 already mentioned 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.

ACTIONS REQUESTED FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee is requested to review progress made regarding the implementation of the Communication Strategy and if applicable give some guidance for improvement.

COMMUNICATION CAPACITY

Before starting to report back on the progress made on the implementation of the Communication Strategy it would be favourable to consider how the Communication Strategy refers to the capacity for communication, which 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 Wings over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project, which means that currently he is only able to invest 30 percent of his available time in the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy. Although the implementation of the Strategy is his responsibility all other AEWA Staff members are also involved, albeit for probably only a few hours a week. By end of 2006 the post of Information Assistant (part-time) as agreed by MOP3 was filled. With the entering on duty of the Junior Professional Officer the technical expertise within the Secretariat was boosted. It is hoped that in coming years the level of technical expertise will further increase.

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 to:

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

As already indicated, due to a lack of resources both in financial and human terms, not much progress was able to be made regarding the implementation of this part of the Communication Strategy with the exception of activity 1.2. as reported below.

Activity 1.2 Interactivity in-between meetings

The Secretariat has undertaken the first steps to establish designated web pages for the AEWA Technical and Standing Committees on its public website. In this section, members of both Committees will be introduced; the background and contact information of each member will be made available as well as information regarding regional representation. Also steps have been undertaken to report back on meetings on the website, including on decisions taken and on future meetings. A new web-based working space for the Technical Committee is under development, which will allow online discussion and better archiving of TC-related work. A first draft of this new interactive website was presented to TC8. Furthermore a face-to-face coordination meeting between the Executive Secretary, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee and the Chair of the Technical Committee took place in the margin of the 4th meeting of the Standing Committee in 2006.

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 the establishment of exchange centres for AEWA
- 2.3 Engage ambassadors to encourage further Range States to become Contracting Parties focussing on Russia, the Baltic States, Central Asia and Africa in 2006.

Unfortunately funds are lacking for the implementation of activities 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 promoting the Agreement whenever appropriate. The Wetlands International Office in Dakar has supported us in the past and continues to do so. On a regular basis the Executive Secretary has contacts with these NGOs to inform them about 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; she has now emigrated to Canada. It should be mentioned here that there is no budget 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 the:

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

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

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. To improve and maintain the AEWA Website
- 4.2. The regular publication of the AEWA Newsletter
- 4.3. To initiate and provide the infrastructure for e-discussion
- 4.4. To develop guidelines for accession
- 4.5. To develop a set of resource materials for awareness-raising at national level

Activity 4.1: Improve and maintain the AEWA Website

In 2005 the AEWA Website has been restructured. Since the Junior Professional Officer entered on duty, the website has been regularly up-dated and news of current activities and/ or projects has been posted.

It is expected that with the implementation of the Wings over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEFAfrican-Eurasian Flyways 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 the UNEP 'Knowledge Management Project' focusing on MEAs. The project developed a web portal that provides access to AEWA's strategic documents, for example.

Activity 4.2: Regular publication of the AEWA Newsletter

Since MOP3 a HTML E-Newsletter has been sent out to over 2500 entries in our database on a regular basis.

A special edition of the Newsletter on the outcome of MOP3 was published in 2006. Furthermore since MOP3 we have published a further issue of the regular Newsletter. 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 of those involved in the conservation of Migratory Waterbirds.

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

One of the tasks of the Information Assistant was to improve the current address database and to establish an email list. This has meanwhile taken place and is of great importance due to the fact that this list is used for distribution of the E-news and to inform addressees about any changes on the website.

Progress was not able to be made on establishing an e-discussion forum due to lack of resources.

Activity 4.4: Develop guidelines 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 were originally only available in English, into Russian, Arabic and French. Since then the guidelines for accession have been distributed to countries that are in the process of acceding to AEWA on a regular basis.

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

Work is ongoing to develop a toolkit. Many of the materials to be included in this toolkit are now available (DVD on AEWA, Flyway Posters and several AEWA Publications) and should be combined with some of the flyway training materials being developed in the context of the Wings Over Wetlands Project. It is expected that after MOP4 the Information Unit within the Agreement Secretariat will start putting the tool-kit together and preparing 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 in it, is out of date and therefore the text has to be reviewed. It is expected that this can be done in the coming months and that this Reader can be published in early 2009.

10th Anniversary Calendar

By the end of 2005 the 10th Anniversary Calendar was published. For this Calendar Mr Yves Fagniat provided us with pictures of his watercolour paintings free of charge. The paintings were used for the

AEWA exhibition at the Museum Koenig; which was opened by the former Minister of Environment and Nuclear Safety of Germany Mr. Jürgen Trittin on 4th of July 2005 to mark the 10th Anniversary of AEWA.

DVD on AEWA

One of the activities, albeit not mentioned in the Communication Strategy; is the development of a DVD on AEWA. At MOP3 the second part of the AEWA DVD, developed by a consortium of Fiction Film and Musch & Tinbergen, was presented. Although the idea is to shoot a large amount of footage in coming years to be used for the purpose of promoting the Agreement, the lack of sufficient resources is hampering the implementation of this idea. Therefore it is hoped that the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project; in which the development of DVD on AEWA is an integral part, will provide some opportunities to continue work on developing this DVD in future.

WMBD DVD

A small grant was made available by AEWA to support the development of a DVD of the main launching event of the World Migratory Bird Day in 2006. By the end of 2006 a copy of this DVD was received and widely distributed.

AEWA Exhibition Stands

The AEWA Secretariat has developed a new 2m x 2m and 2m x 80cm display for use at public presentations. In addition the AEWA Information Unit has contributed to the development of the AEWA panels of the new CMS Family and UN in Bonn Exhibitions.

New AEWA Flyway Posters

Two new AEWA Flyway Posters are being developed together with UNEP-WCMC; for the Sociable Lapwing and the Madagascar Pond Heron. Both posters will be available well before MOP4.

Climate Change Publication

As part of the implementation of Resolution 3.17 a report on the effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds within the Agreement area was commissioned to the British Trust for Ornithology. This comprehensive report will be presented in a succinct popular version, which will be printed as a small booklet for MOP4.

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 9th 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 in 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. The Secretariat managed to organise the launch of WMBD in less than four months, as well as establishing a special website (www.worldmigratorybirdday.org) and raising 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. Since its launch in 2006, WMBD was celebrated annually during the second weekend of May. In 2008 celebrations took place in 61 countries with over 140 different events, which clearly shows that WMBD is increasing in popularity. 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

particularly the enormous outreach WMBD has achieved in the past three years with very limited resources in place.

Although WMBD is a common activity of CMS and AEWA most of the substantial work connected to the organisation of WMBD is carried out by the AEWA Team.

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 consisting of 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 (annually)
- UN Day1 in Bonn, Germany (annually)
- Open day2 UN in Bonn, Germany (2007)
- CBD COP9, Germany (19-30 May 2008)

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 at these events.

1 The establishment of the UN is annually celebrated in Bonn with information stands of different UN organisations at the Market place in the centre of Bonn.

2 After the move of the UN to the new Premises a open day was organised for the general public to visit the new Premises.