
**REPORT OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE
AEWA STANDING COMMITTEE¹**

16 – 17 June 2010, The Hague, the Netherlands

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. Mr. Martin Lok from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality opened the Meeting on behalf of the Dutch Government and welcomed the Delegates to the Ministry.

Agenda item 2. Election of Officers

2. Mr. Lok introduced this Agenda item and invited the Members of the Standing Committee (StC) to propose candidates for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee.

3. Mr. Adu Nsiah proposed Norway for the Chair. This was seconded by Mr. Mafabi and the Meeting elected Norway.

4. Ms. Courouble proposed Uganda for the Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Mr. van Dijk and the Meeting elected Uganda.

5. Mr. Lok congratulated the candidates who then proceeded to take up their functions.

6. Mr. Størkersen, Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, thanked the Meeting for his election and expressed his appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands for hosting the meeting.

7. Mr. Lenten noted that five of the seven Members of the Standing Committee were present. The requirement for a quorum, which consists of at least four members, was therefore fulfilled.

Additional agenda item: Introduction of Mr. Carlos Martin-Novella, Senior Advisor for MEAs at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

8. On the occasion of his first mission to Europe, Mr. Martin-Novella welcomed the opportunity to have been able to attend the preceding AEWA 15th Anniversary Symposium, as well as the StC meeting on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Achim Steiner. He went on to explain that his new role at UNEP is that of supporting the biodiversity-related MEAs and helping them to work more efficiently by exploiting opportunities for synergies. He gave his assurance that the AEWA Secretariat could count on the full support of UNEP. He also took the opportunity to welcome any ideas and suggestions for the development of this initiative.

9. He went on to mention the development of a new intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES), which is currently being developed to answer the need for a stronger international science-policy tool to enable emerging scientific knowledge to be translated into specific action at the appropriate levels.

¹ Adopted by the Seventh Meeting of the Standing Committee, 26 – 27 November 2011, Bergen, Norway.

He reported that this would be a useful tool for looking at synergies among biodiversity-related conventions and helping them to function more efficiently.

10. The Chair welcomed this new platform and looked forward to the potential advantages for the respective conventions.

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

11. Mr. Lenten introduced document StC 6.2 *Rules of Procedure*, which were revised and adopted at StC5. Mr. Lenten proposed to change the procedure of tabling the Rules of Procedure (RoP) at every StC Meeting and instead, to provide the RoP as an information document at the next meeting(s), only adding them to the Agenda if there is a specific request for amendment. This procedure is already being successfully applied by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

12. The Meeting adopted the Rules of Procedure and agreed to the above proposal.

Agenda item 4. Adoption of the Agenda

13. Mr. Lenten introduced the document StC 6.3 *Provisional Annotated Agenda and Work Programme*.

14. Responding to Mr. van Dijk's proposition to include the outcome of the AEWA 15th Anniversary Symposium in the Agenda as well as the outcome of the Meeting organized by Wetlands International on *Strengthening of international waterbird monitoring in the AEWA region*, the Meeting agreed that both items should be included; Mr. Nagy would report on the Wetlands International Meeting under Agenda item 7. *Reports from Standing Committee Members and Observers* and the AEWA 15th Anniversary Symposium could be reported on under Agenda item 19. *Any other business*.

15. Mr. van Dijk went on to propose a report on the Accession Workshop held in Moscow in March 2010, which could be incorporated in Agenda item 7. under *Report of the Depositary*.

16. Mr. Biber noted that he would not be present on the second day of the Meeting and suggested re-scheduling Agenda item 18. *Developments of interest to AEWA (CMS Future Shape Process)*, so that he could brief the Meeting on this issue in his capacity as Chair of the CMS Future Shape Working Group.

17. The Chair suggested re-scheduling this Agenda item 18 to precede Agenda item 12 after lunch on the first day.

18. In response to an observation by Mr. Mafabi with regard to the lack of a definition of the role of Standing Committee Members, which would be particularly useful in the case of new members, Mr. Lenten noted that this was held down in Resolution 2.6 on the establishment of the AEWA Standing Committee. Mr. Lenten assured the Meeting, however, that the Secretariat would work on developing relevant guidelines, in line with CMS, in time for the next StC Meeting.

19. The Meeting adopted the Agenda including the above-mentioned additions and amendments.

Agenda item 5. Admission of Observers

20. Mr. Lenten introduced the Observers to the Meeting being the following Contracting Parties: the European Union, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Germany and Switzerland and the Chair of the AEWA Technical Committee, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU

(FACE), Wetlands International, Birdlife International, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the UNEP-Division of Global Environment Facility and Mr. Camillo Ponziani from the WOW Project Coordination Unit under UNOPS.

21. The Meeting accepted the Observers and the Chair welcomed their active participation in the Meeting.

Agenda item 6. Adoption of the draft report of the 5th Meeting of the Standing Committee

22. Mr. Lenten introduced document StC 6.4 rev 1 *Draft Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee*, which had been the StC Meeting leading up to MOP4 in June 2008.

23. The Meeting adopted the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee with no further comments.

Agenda item 7. Reports from the Standing Committee Members and Observers

24. Mr. Lenten introduced this Agenda item referring to Mr. Mafabi's former question regarding the role of the StC Regional Representatives as being primarily that of being active in reaching out to the Non-Contracting Parties and reporting back to the Meeting on activities promoting the Agreement in their regions, to enable the Secretariat to follow up and support, wherever possible. He went on to point out that NGO's can also play an important role in using their networks to promote the Agreement. He invited the Members and Observers to report on progress made with regard to AEWA in their respective regions.

25. On behalf of the Netherlands, Mr. van Dijk reported that the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Moscow had provided the funds for a Workshop promoting AEWA, which took place in March 2010. The Meeting, which had gone well, highlighted the difficulties for Russia to accede to the Agreement with spring hunting remaining a major obstacle. He went on to report that the Netherlands were active in supporting Morocco, which is a signatory to the Agreement as well as Turkey with regard to accession issues.

26. On behalf of Eastern and Southern Africa, Mr. Mafabi reported that since Uganda had been chosen to represent Eastern and Southern Africa, his department at the Ministry of Water and Environment was establishing its coordinating role and one member of staff had been assigned to specifically handle AEWA issues. He noted that it had been difficult to harmonize AEWA and CMS activities as CMS issues were coordinated by a different ministry but this problem had now been resolved. He went on to report that the Ramsar Center for Eastern Africa (RAMCEA) had been established in Uganda, initially including Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and is currently accessing the capacity needs for five countries within the region. Reiterating the issue about the responsibilities of the Regional Representatives, Mr. Mafabi reported that the next priority step would be to reach out to the wider region and that guidance would be appreciated to support these activities, which represented a major challenge for developing countries and also required financial resources.

27. Mr. Lenten expressed his thanks for this report and confirmed that the Secretariat would provide the Regional Representatives with contacts to countries in their regions. He went on to underline the importance of raising any issues of importance in the region with Ms. Moloko, who is Coordinator for the African Initiative within the AEWA Secretariat. Ms. Moloko is currently preparing an Action Plan for Africa in preparation for MOP5.

28. On behalf of Western and Central Africa, Mr. Adu-Nsiah reported that feedback from Contracting Parties and other Range States in his region had been poor, partly due to the problem of communication with francophone countries. A number of countries had participated in World

Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) and registered their activities with the Secretariat. Discussions with Non-Contracting Parties were ongoing, particularly Liberia and Burkina Faso, where a national workshop in preparation for the ratification to the Agreement will take place in October 2010.

29. In summary, Mr. Adu-Nsiah stressed the importance of language assistance for bi-lingual AEWA Regions, such as Western and Central Africa in order to facilitate communication. He went on to urge the Secretariat to strengthen efforts at encouraging Non-Contracting Parties to accede to the Agreement.

30. Mr. Lenten agreed that translation is a problem and that the Secretariat would help wherever possible. The Coordinator of the African Initiative is active in contacting African countries and response had been good so far.

31. On behalf of France, which is hosting the next MOP, Ms. Courouble reported that preparations for MOP5, which would take place in La Rochelle in May 2012, were well underway. The Steering Committee had met in April 2010 and discussed the schedule for the five days of the Meeting. A detailed report would follow under Agenda item 16. She went on to report about a project in cooperation with Spain, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands for the development of a pan-European strategy on the eradication of the Ruddy Duck, supported by the Bern Convention and AEWA. Another project is currently under development and co-run by the French Ministry of Environment (MEEDDM) in Tour du Valat, France to assist the International Waterbird Census (IWC) project managed by Wetlands International. The first phase of this project will take place in the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas, starting in summer 2010 and the second phase in Africa.

32. On behalf of Europe and Central Asia, Mr. Størkensen reported that Norway was active in the development of National Action Plans for 54 populations including the Black-tailed Godwit and the Lesser White-fronted Goose, for which Norway had been able to draw on national funds. International activities for the protection of this species had proved difficult due to illegal hunting and bad management of protected sites as well as a number of socio-economic issues. The situation in Greece was proving particularly problematic due to non-compliance with AEWA and EU regulations. He went on to express his hope for more involvement by the EU in the form of an EU LIFE project focusing on the European area.

33. He went on to report that Norway was also focusing on financing various projects in Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as well as Syria and other smaller areas, thus supporting the activities of AEWA and the other Multilateral Environmental Agreements by providing substantial funding.

34. Mr. Krabbe reported on Danish activities regarding seabirds, partly relevant to AEWA. The fact that all seabird colonies breeding on the North Atlantic are declining fast, not only in Denmark, but also in Norway, the Faroe Islands and Scotland is a huge problem, which the Nordic Council is beginning to tackle by developing an Action Plan for seabirds in the North Atlantic. Industrial fishing and changing nutrient supplies due to climate change are major factors. A first meeting had already taken place in Malmö, Sweden and first steps had been taken to initiate this Action Plan, which is kindly being sponsored by the Norwegian Government.

35. On behalf of Germany, Ms. Pauly reported that Germany was working on the development of a business plan for the enhancement of cooperation between the Wadden Sea countries, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark and African countries.

36. As this initiative is linked to AEWA with regard to cooperation along the flyways, Mr Lenten asked Germany to keep the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat informed about any new developments regarding this issue.

37. Ms. Pauly went on to report on the initiative to inscribe the Dutch and German parts of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage Site and the hope that Denmark would follow. Another project being

substantially sponsored by the German Government is a three-year scientific project aiming to examine the population size and conservation status of birds wintering in the Wadden Sea and Baltic Sea. Germany's activities continued to focus on supporting countries towards accession to AEWA, particularly Poland and Russia. A high level meeting between the German and Russian Environment Ministers was planned, which was warmly welcomed by the Meeting.

38. The Chair welcomed Mr. Rammul, who was attending the StC for the first time on behalf of Estonia. Mr. Rammul reported that he was new at the Ministry and happy to be able to attend this Meeting as an Observer. He reported that Estonia was also celebrating an anniversary; that of 100 years of nature conservation. An important ongoing issue was that of the amendment of the Hunting Act to stop the use of lead shot as of 1 January 2013. This was a lengthy process but he hoped that it could be finalized on time. He went on to report on a popular campaign focusing on monitoring the Black Stork by using satellite tracking devices and nest cameras, which had led to a lot of publicity. He noted that Estonia was in the process of developing a number of national Action Plans for high priority species, including the Lesser White-fronted Goose and the Dunlin subspecies *Calidris alpina schinzii*, which was adopted by Estonian Ministry of the Environment in July 2010.

39 Mr. Biber added that Switzerland had developed a national Action Plan for the western population of the White Stork, on a bilateral basis with France, Germany and Spain. This will be forwarded to the AEWA Secretariat in due course for discussion in the Technical Committee with regard to possibly extending this plan.

40. Mr. Lenten commented that out of the 255 species covered by AEWA, a list of ten had been selected as being top priority species. Although the AEWA Secretariat was not able to provide resources for the development of Action Plans for further species, it welcomed and supported any initiatives taken by countries to do this.

41. On behalf of Belgium, specifically the province of Flanders, Ms. Roggemann reported that a regional nature conservation status for all species, including waterbirds, had been carried out and would be approved by the Government very soon. The management of protected sites was also a priority in the region. A management plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck was being developed for Flanders. She reported of the problems with gulls around the coastal area and that a management/protection plan was being developed in close cooperation with the stakeholders involved.

42. Mr. Paixão reported on behalf of the European Commission that he is now in charge of AEWA and CMS issues after some administrative changes. One major issue currently being dealt with by the EC in connection with agriculture and fisheries was the mortality of seabirds due to by-catch and The Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) was developing a Plan of Action for adoption next year. The EU provided funds for a number of highly acclaimed specific projects leading to the designation of sites for completing the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment. On the issue of lead shot, Mr. Paixão reported that a questionnaire had been sent out to the member states on the status of implementation of the ban on lead shot, which showed that gaps still exist so that this would be followed up in the coming years.

43. On behalf of BirdLife International, Ms. Crockford reported on the new reliable evidence that proves that the impact of ingesting lead ammunition is not limited to waterfowl and lead shot but to lead bullets and all habitats, thus affecting smaller, vulnerable species. Further evidence indicates that the risk to human health may also be significantly higher than previously thought due to the incomplete removal of lead shot fragments during the butchery process.

44. She went on to give an up-date on the current situation at Lake Natron in Tanzania, where although the large-scale soda ash extraction plant project had not been carried out, a revised version of the development could re-emerge at a later stage, so the situation for this site, one of only three breeding sites of the Lesser Flamingo in East Africa, remained precarious. A key goal is to ensure better protection of the lake in cooperation with the governments and stakeholders involved.

45. The Tana River Delta site in Kenya is another site under unprecedented threat by corporations and foreign agencies aiming to exploit the area for biofuel plantations, other crops and minerals etc., thereby posing a major threat for at least 22 populations of waterbirds as well as thousands of local people, who are being evicted from their ancestral land. Ms. Crockford stressed that the focus must be on the production of a development and conservation plan including all stakeholders for the whole area in order to provide planning security for developers while safeguarding important biodiversity and ensuring the livelihoods of local communities. The designation of the Tana River Delta as a Ramsar site is also of utmost importance before the damage becomes irreversible.

46. A further site in Kenya causing a great deal of concern is Lake Naivasha. Ms. Crockford reported that it is being destroyed rapidly by water extraction and the introduction of nutrients, among other things. Nature Kenya is working on getting the threats documented and building a local site support group to boost urgently needed conservation measures.

47. Lastly Ms. Crockford reported that the search for the Slender-billed Curlew was ongoing, involving teams from all the Range States. The search was being focused on Ukraine, Serbia and Hungary, where it is thought that the birds may moult. There had, however, been no reliable sighting since February 1995 in Morocco.

48. Coming back to the lead shot issue, Mr. Lenten informed the Meeting about discussions at the recent meeting of the CIC, where a global group of ammunition manufacturers reported that the alternatives to lead shot were no safer, e.g. zinc, which is toxic. He stressed that more work needs to be done on this, in close cooperation with the manufacturers.

49. On behalf of FACE Mr. Griffin reported that 13 EU member states had phased out the use of lead shot and around nine had proposed legislation, which could come into force within the next two to three years. FACE recently sent out a press release urging member states to phase out the use of lead shot for hunting weapons. Discussions are underway between FACE, CIC, the EU and firearms manufacturers to try to convince them to find suitable alternatives to lead shot. The results of a recent survey among EU member states on the use of lead shot would be sent to the Secretariat in due course.

50. Referring to the promotion of AEWAs among potential Contracting Parties, Mr. Griffin reported that on the occasion of the Conference of the International Union of Game Biologists (IUGB) in August 2009, a meeting had taken place between FACE and representatives at the Russian Environment Ministry dealing with hunting issues, where accession to AEWAs was one of the issues discussed in connection with the use of lead shot. FACE had also had the opportunity to promote AEWAs in Turkey. He also pointed out that it would be beneficial if AEWAs could be represented at the upcoming CIC General Assembly in St. Petersburg in May 2011.

51. The Chair acknowledged and welcomed the efforts of FACE towards promoting AEWAs and its implementation.

52. On behalf of Wetlands International, Mr. Nagy reported on the development of a project proposal for GEF funding relating to the Central Asian Flyway, which overlaps with the AEWAs region. This is an important initiative, which will also help protect a number of AEWAs species.

53. Another project is the *Long Journey Project*, which represents a practical demonstration of the flyway approach, focusing on the North-western European population of the Bewick's Swan, which has declined rapidly during the last 10 years and would probably come under the threatened category. An Action Plan had been developed which is currently being circulated for consultation with experts and will subsequently be forwarded to AEWAs.

54. Under the framework of other projects, Wetlands International supports a number of catching sites in Lithuania and Egypt for example. The *Stop over Black Sea* project, funded by the Dutch Government and involving Turkey, the Ukraine, Georgia, Russia, Bulgaria and Romania aims to

extend mid-winter counts to the autumn migration season and set up a network in this important region. A similar project proposal has been submitted to the Dutch Embassy in Russia to strengthen waterbird conservation in the Russian Federation. Another project being developed is one to promote the flyway concept by developing a network of centres along other flyways in Europe and West Africa. Funding is still being sought for this promising initiative.

55. Mr. Nagy went on to report on the outcome of the International Waterbird Census Meeting, which took place immediately after the AEWA 15th Anniversary Symposium in The Hague on 15 June and was well attended. Good quality waterbird information is of utmost importance for AEWA, as held down in the AEWA Strategic Plan and a number of resolutions, particularly Res. 3.6. Wetlands International held a side event at MOP4 to highlight the issue and the urgent need to improve the situation. In the meantime a review had been carried out to investigate what had to be done to fulfil the needs as well as the necessary financial framework to implement the scheme. The results of this review were presented to the meeting in The Hague. Mr. Nagy stressed the huge discrepancy between the expectations of the relevant MEAs with regard to waterbird monitoring and the means available, despite the efforts of Range States such as France and some NGOs. He went on to urge the Ramsar and AEWA Secretariats to use the momentum of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP/GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project to encourage Parties to provide funding for an initial three-year scheme.

56. Responding to a question on action taken by the Secretariat with regard to the threatened sites in West Africa, Mr. Lenten confirmed that the Secretariat was closely monitoring developments and had taken part in missions to the sites and expressed its concern to the respective Governments.

57. Mr. Mafabi stressed the importance of the specific recommendations resulting from the Ramsar Advisory Missions and that the AEWA Secretariat should follow these up and encourage the countries involved to work together to overcome the significant threats involved.

Agenda item 8. Presentation on the 5th Global Environmental Facility (GEF-5) Programme

58. Mr. Eduardo Zandri, Task Manager, Biodiversity and Natural Resources, UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility, presented the latest developments regarding the recently launched GEF-5 programme. The success and positive outcomes of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) and Siberian Crane projects provided a positive background for new GEF project proposals. The country allocation system is different to that of GEF-4 in that countries can decide on priorities for funding on a national basis. The application process has also been shortened and simplified. One important aspect for each project proposal is the provision of co-financing. Project proposals must address one of the GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies such as biodiversity, climate change and chemicals. Mr. Zandri offered his support to any of the StC6 participants wishing to submit proposals to GEF. Detailed information on eligibility and requirements is available on the GEF website: <http://www.thegef.org/gef/guidelines>.

Agenda item 9. Report of the Depository

59. On behalf of the Depository, Mr. van Dijk referred to document StC 6.5. He reported that currently 63 countries were Party to the Agreement and two (Greece, Morocco) had signed but not yet ratified. Ethiopia was the last country to ratify and has been a Party since February 2010.

Agenda item 10. Report of the Technical Committee

60. In her capacity as Chair of the Technical Committee (TC), Ms. Kralj reported on the work of the TC. Shortly after MOP4, the new TC Work Plan for the period 2009–2012 was developed. According

to this Work Plan, ten Working Groups had been established covering major issues (each consisting of several tasks) that have to be fulfilled within the next quadriennium.

61. The TC Workspace had been launched in January 2009; this open source, password-protected web-based communication tool for the TC members provided easy access to documents, enabled correspondence and discussions and the archiving of all TC related work. The workspace has a dedicated space for each Working Group in the Working Area as well as a separate Discussion Area, where anyone can create a forum topic on issues not covered by the work plan. The Resource Area enables easy access to a number of AEWA documents. The TC Workspace has proved to be of great advantage and is widely used by a number of TC members, making communication easier and more effective.

62. TC9 was held on 20-23 April 2009 in Zagreb, Croatia, where five new regional representatives and three new experts took up their functions. The heavy agenda included a large number of tasks that were designated to the TC by MOP4. For the first time, the majority of work was done in the form of working groups, which outlined their respective work schedules and set down deadlines to ensure timely conclusion for the tasks in hand. One issue discussed included the implementation of the International Implementation Tasks 2009-2016 as adopted by MOP4. It was clear that although some positive progress could be reported the lack of sources from voluntary contributions prevented progress in many areas, which would have a negative impact on the implementation of the Agreement.

63. Ms. Kralj went on to outline the sub-tasks of the ten Working Groups, where work was ongoing and progress had been made in many areas. The TC had been able to advise on a number of issues, including the Possible Case Information Sheet for the IRP mission on the conservation of the Sociable Lapwing in Syria, the multi-species Action Plan for Southern African seabirds, the desk study on the potential impacts of fisheries on seabirds in the Afrotropical region, the ToR for the compilation of a review of and guidelines for mitigating/avoiding the conflict between migratory birds and electricity power grids, the African Initiative questionnaires and the review of the impact of agrochemicals on waterbirds in Africa.

64. The next (and last pre-MOP5) TC Meeting would take place in 2011.

Agenda item 11. Report of the Secretariat

65. Mr. Dereliev introduced document 6.6 *Report of the Secretariat* explaining that the Secretariat report listed the activities of the Secretariat in connection with the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 (Annex I) and the AEWA International Implementation Tasks (IIT) 2009-2016 (Annex II) since MOP4 in 2008. Where relevant, it was made clear which IIT represented matching funding for the WOW project. Mr. Dereliev thanked Mr. Camillo Ponziani, WOW Project Manager for helping to compile the report.

66. He went on to report on the activities undertaken by the Secretariat. Objective 4 of the Strategic Plan, relating to the AEWA Communication Strategy, was not included as this would be reported on separately by the AEWA Information Officer, Mr. Florian Keil.

67. With regard to Target 5.4: The Small Grants Fund (SGF), Mr. Dereliev reported that since its activation in 2010, the first cycle had been launched and 31 applications from African countries had been received, which were being evaluated by the Secretariat. The StC members would be informed about the selected proposals for funding in due course and requested for their approval.

68. In addition to the information given under Target 5.1., on the membership of the Agreement, Mr. Lenten noted that the accession process was progressing well in Mauritania and Botswana and that the Secretariat would continue to support both countries wherever possible.

69. Mr. Dereliev observed that Ethiopia was a very positive example whereby the accession process had only taken one year to complete.

70. Regarding Target 3.1 on necessary resources to support the international processes for gathering monitoring data for species status assessment, the Chair referred to the IWC Meeting in The Hague, where the participants had requested that the Secretariat approach the Parties, urging them to support the IWC programme. He proposed mandating the Secretariat and Wetlands International to draft an appropriate letter to the Parties outlining the relevance and fundamental importance of the IWC for the Implementation of the Agreement.

71. He went on to propose that the Secretariat compile a list of potential member countries and make this available to all stakeholders to enable them to support and liaise with them regarding the accession procedure.

72. Mr. Mafabi stressed the importance of informing Parties of the advantages of acceding to the Agreement and also of keeping in close and regular communication with them.

73. Regarding Target 5.6 on increasing the capacity of national staff to implement the Agreement through training organisms, he remarked that the actual needs should be assessed in order to maximize the added value of training.

74. In response, Mr. Lenten reported that potential Parties to the Agreement were informed about all aspects of becoming a Party and that the written information on the accession procedure was in the process of being improved. Another aspect was the support given to new Parties and particularly the briefing of Focal Points, which sometimes changed quite frequently. The necessary funds for carrying out capacity training workshops were unfortunately lacking. Mr. Lenten confirmed that the Secretariat would follow up these issues.

75. Mr. van Dijk suggested encouraging Parties to assist neighbouring countries, having recently joined the Agreement.

76. Mr. Lenten responded that it would be more productive to develop training material for potential or new Parties (as in the case of the WetCap project). He reported on the successful Pre-MOP Negotiation Workshop for anglophone African countries which had been carried out before MOP4, where countries were trained how to negotiate at formal meetings. The participants profited very much and were immediately able to apply their newly acquired skills in the meeting. A similar workshop for francophone African countries will be carried out in connection with MOP5.

77. Mr. Biber welcomed all the efforts being made to get more Range States on board; he stressed the importance of encouraging all the Range States to become involved in implementing the international SSAPs.

78. Outlining the example of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, where the coordination mechanism is based at the Secretariat, Mr. Dereliev explained that the Coordinator involves Non-Contracting Parties in funded activities in Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, none of which are Partners to the Agreement but where the success of the implementation of the Action Plan depends on their involvement. The Secretariat is also in the process of developing coordination mechanisms for further Action Plans and welcomes Range States to become involved in the Working Groups, regardless of their status in the Agreement.

79. Although it was agreed that the Secretariat was making the best use of the funds available, substantial funds were still lacking for supporting countries with the accession process, activities and the finalizing of tasks in preparation for MOP5. The Meeting therefore agreed to give the Secretariat the mandate to approach the Parties with regard to funding for the IWC (draft to be prepared by the

Secretariat in cooperation with Wetlands International) and to repeat the reminder sent to the Parties in August 2009 regarding MOP4 tasks as well as to underline the most urgent funding needs.

80. Mr. Dereliev continued by outlining the 31 AEWA International Implementation Tasks 2009 – 2016 in Annex II of the document and noted that most activities which are implemented are the GEF-WOW-linked projects and that very little funds had been made available for other projects since MOP4.

81. Mr. Ponziani explained that with regard to Task 25 *Regional training programmes in Africa for the implementation of the Agreement (GEF-WOW)*, although the importance of AEWA and accession to AEWA were always stressed during ongoing training workshops no actual training programmes for the implementation of the Agreement in Africa had been carried out.

82. Mr. Dereliev explained that this project would remain on the list of tasks after the closure of the WOW project and that the Secretariat would endeavour to secure the necessary funds.

83. The Chair thanked Mr. Dereliev and the Secretariat for the impressive list of achievements considering the limited resources available.

84. On behalf of Wetlands International, Mr. Nagy reported that Task 16 relating to the IWC was directly connected to the recent workshop held in The Hague and the planned follow-up with regard to fund-raising. Regarding Task 17, Wetlands International had developed project proposals for two waterbird atlases, which would complete the flyway atlases for the AEWA region. With regard to Task 27, referring to field guides for Central Asia and adjacent countries, he remarked that these were already available in Russian.

85. Mr. Dereliev reported that the currently available guides were not of a good standard and that a small grant could be enough to produce a good guide for Central Asia, where the expertise in the region should be made use of together with good paintings and distribution maps. He proposed RSPB as initiator for this project due to its representation in the region.

86. Ms. Crockford agreed to approach the relevant colleagues, which was very much welcomed by the Chair.

87. Mr. Zandri noted that a number of these tasks could be eligible for future GEF financing. Some proposals were already being developed, e.g. Task 7 *Restoration and rehabilitation techniques for waterbird habitats, particularly in Africa* could be a potential task for Ghana. Regarding Task 8 *Conservation Programme of migratory bird roosting sites located in the Albertine Rift Region (Eastern Africa)*, the Africa Partnership Secretariat was already working on a concept with GEF funding, which could address this task.

88. He went on to stress the strong interest of the GEF Secretariat with regard to Task 23 *Bioclimatic modelling of changes in distribution of species and populations critically and highly threatened by climate change under the different climatic scenarios*. There was interest in the work of BirdLife and partners on the adaptation of the network of protected areas with regard to climate change and GEF could be involved in helping to address this task.

89. With regard to training, Mr. Faser from the Iran Ramsar Center had offered to host a training programme for AEWA countries in the region. Mr. Zandri urged the Secretariat to follow this up.

90. Mr. Biber stressed the urgency of these tasks and suggested reducing the list to the priority projects only and communicating this to the Parties by sending a diplomatic note once a year to remind the governments of the decisions made by the MOP and that voluntary contributions are essential in order to implement these high priority tasks.

91. Following a number of suggestions on this subject, Mr. Lenten noted that the list of tasks had decreased from 40 to 31 and that he felt it was better to keep all the projects on the list so that countries have a choice of issues to support. He added that experience had shown that personal contact was by far the most effective method for securing funds.

92. In response to Mr. Paixão's confirmation that the EC was in the process of developing guidance relating to Task 13 *Developing guidance to avoid or mitigate the impacts of wind energy developments on waterbirds and their habitats*, Mr. Dereliev pointed out that this guidance, initiated by the Bern Convention was based on the EU only and that something much broader would be needed for the Agreement area; however this could be used as a basis.

93. Mr. Zandri reiterated that the Secretariat may want to provide assistance to GEF-eligible member countries for the development of proposals to GEF and suggest this in connection with its call for contributions.

94. The Chair summarized that the Meeting acknowledged the importance of reminding the Parties, particularly new Parties or new Focal Points, that the annual contributions made by the countries covered the costs of the Secretariat only and that the activities listed in the International Implementation Tasks were dependent upon voluntary contributions for their implementation.

Agenda item 12. Report on the Communication Strategy

95. Mr. Keil introduced document StC 6.7 *Update on the status of the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy* and reported on the developments regarding the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy (CS) since MOP4 in September 2008.

96. Two factors have played a major role since the adoption of the CS, which was originally conceived in the assumption that the incumbent Junior Professional Officer (JPO) provided by the Government of Germany would be able to allocate 100% of his time towards its implementation. In reality, however, only 30% of his time was allocated to AEWA activities due to his involvement in the WOW project and the CMS Family in the form of in-kind contributions. The second factor is that the CS has been fully dependent on voluntary contributions since its adoption and that few funds have come in to support these activities to date.

97. Despite this difficult initial situation, genuine progress has been made, both directly and indirectly with the help of a number of important factors, which had not been foreseen in the original CS:

- The UNEP-GEF Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Project has not only played a significant role in promoting the Agreement in the AEWA region but has also developed the network and resources which could, funding permitting, be used in years to come to conduct the training envisaged in the original CS. Similarly the four Regional Centres established in the context of WOW (located in Dakar, Almaty, Moscow, Nairobi and Amman) have functioned as regional hubs for the exchange of information under the WOW Project and could be used for communication and capacity building activities related to AEWA in the future if funding was secured;
- First initiated by the AEWA Secretariat in 2006, the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign has been very successful in increasing awareness on AEWA both within and outside the AEWA region; and
- Last but not least, the African Initiative, adopted by MOP4 and the recruitment of a designated Coordinator (made possible through a voluntary contribution from the French Government) will help contribute to the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy in Africa, especially with regard to Capacity Building.

98. Other significant achievements include:

- The Technical Committee Workspace or intranet (<http://tcworkspace.aewa.info/>), already described in the report of the Technical Committee; this tool has contributed considerably to improving communication and the inter-sessional work of the Technical Committee;
- The highly successful Pre-MOP Negotiation Training Workshop for Anglophone countries in Africa, which preceded MOP4 and was carried out in close cooperation with the UNEP Division of Environmental Conventions and Law (UNEP/DELCL);
- Awareness raising activities include the regular updating and maintenance of the AEWA website and the distribution of the bi-monthly E-Newsletter to a large number of AEWA stakeholders, informing them of the latest activities and projects.

99. It is expected that the Information Officer will be able to dedicate more time towards the implementation of the CS as from 2011, after completion of the WOW project; however in order to be able to implement the CS as foreseen, the overall technical expertise and capacity within the Secretariat will have to increase and the required funding for CS activities would also have to be raised.

100. The Chair acknowledged the impressive progress made within all the CS objectives and the potential of the Secretariat to be able to do much more with the help of appropriate funding.

101. Mr. Martin-Novella informed the Meeting that a number of Officials under UNEP were responsible for supporting MEAs in different regions relating to AEWA and encouraged the Secretariat to contact them in order to use their potential as multipliers with regard to awareness-raising campaigns such as WMBD.

Agenda item 13. Reports on the Implementation of projects

WOW Project

102. Mr. Lenten introduced this report explaining that the document originally planned (StC6.8) had been replaced by the information document 6.6. *WOW Project Newsletter: Flyway Conservation at Work – across Africa and Eurasia*.

103. Mr. Ponziani, the WOW Operations Manager from UNOPS, currently based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat gave a brief presentation on the major outcomes and the status of the project, the most prominent of which, the Critical Site Network Tool (CSN) was launched on 14 June 2010 at the AEWA 15th Anniversary Symposium in The Hague. The next step will be to disseminate this tool, which covers 3020 sites along the African-Eurasian flyway and involved a tremendous amount of background work. The Flyway Training Kit was also launched earlier in the year and promises to be a great asset for future capacity building and training workshops on AEWA and flyway conservation in general. He went on to describe some of the demonstration projects focusing on key issues for wetland and waterbird conservation. For further information and access to the CSN tool and Flyway Training Kit, please visit the WOW website: www.wingsoverwetlands.org. The core activities will be completed by the end of 2010.

104. The Chair thanked Mr. Ponziani for his presentation outlining the successful outputs of this project, which were very impressive. He expressed his hope that other conservation initiatives would follow this outstanding example of international cooperation.

Strengthening waterbird and wetland conservation capacities in North Africa (WetCap)

105. Mr. Lenten introduced document StC 6.9. *Report on the implementation of the WetCap project*. With a view to exploring new fundraising possibilities, the Secretariat contacted a number of development agencies in 2007. The Spanish Development Agency AECID showed a strong interest in

species conservation and the WetCap² project, focusing on Northern Africa, was developed within a short space of time. The project proposal was based on a three-year duration with an overall budget of € 1,6 million. Although a written contract was never drawn up, the funds for the first year were transferred (€400.000). Last year, the Secretariat was surprised to learn that AECID had decided to discontinue the project, due to a change in funding strategy. Despite every effort on the part of the Secretariat to urge AECID to keep to the obligation made, a concrete response was never received. A Coordinator for the project had been recruited in Morocco and a workshop had been organized in 2009 and some of the official documents relating to AEWA had already been translated into Arabic. The implementation of the project has now been put on hold.

106. Responding to the concerns about the future of this project, Mr. Zandri proposed using the leftover funds to support the countries involved in applying for GEF funding to cover the rest of the WetCap workplan.

African Initiative

107. Mr. Lenten introduced document StC 6.10 *Report on the implementation of the African Initiative*. At MOP4 the proposal had been made to support The Great Rift Valley initiative and efforts to have it listed as a World Heritage site. The proposal was not welcomed by all Parties so instead of focusing on one part of Africa, the MOP decided that the implementation of AEWA should be boosted throughout Africa and adopted the African Initiative³ for that purpose. Some funds from the AEWA budget were allocated so that the Small Grants Fund Programme could be implemented in Africa and the French Government provided funds for the Coordinator of the African Initiative for at least 2 years. Ms. Evelyn Moloko was recruited and her efforts have been extremely successful so far. Ms. Moloko has started to map the activities that are currently in place in Africa and to look at the gaps that AEWA could fill. She has also approached all the Range States in Africa regarding accession to AEWA and good progress has been made. On the basis of these activities, an Action Plan for Africa will be drafted early next year and presented for adoption at MOP5 in 2012. The Secretariat hopes to create a permanent post for the African Initiative at MOP5.

108. Mr. Van Dijk also expressed his appreciation to the French Government for supporting the African Initiative and suggested that it may be more effective to have a regional Officer based in Africa rather than Bonn.

109. Mr. Lenten explained that the interaction with the rest of the AEWA Team, i.e. information exchange, use of expertise and experience of the other Team members, far outweighed the possible advantages of being based in Africa.

110. The Chair also thanked the French Government for generously supporting this initiative and stressed that possibilities should be carefully examined for securing GEF funding.

Agenda item 14. Development of new and implementation of existing Single Species Action Plans (SSAP)

111. Mr. Dereliev presented document StC 6.11 *Development of new and implementation of existing Single Species Action Plans*. Mr. Dereliev proceeded to update the Meeting on the progress of the development of new SSAPs and the updating/revising of existing SSAPs and their implementation.

112. There are currently three new SSAPs in the pipeline for the following (sub)species/populations: Slaty Egret (*Egretta vinaceigula*), Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii* – Western Siberia & NE Europe/North-west Europe population) and Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*). One SSAP, for the Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), is being currently

² <http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/wetcap/index.htm>

³ <http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/africaninitiative.htm>

revised out of the three for which an update/revision was required by Resolution 4.4 and a revision of the SSAP for the Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*) is also being undertaken. In addition, the working group which is dealing with the draft SSAP for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*) met for a 2-day workshop in Bonn and decided on presenting a different type of paper for the conservation of this species to the MOP.

113. Resolution 3.12 instructed the Secretariat to establish mechanisms to coordinate the international implementation of SSAPs pursuant to paragraph 2.2.1 of the Agreement's Action Plan. The Secretariat developed a proposal in this respect, which was presented to the 9th meeting of the Technical Committee (TC) and approved by the Committee. Under this mechanism a Species Working Group will be established for each SSAP, consisting of designated governmental representatives of the principal Range States, as well as representatives of national expert and conservation organisations. In addition, the chair of the working group may invite and admit international expert and conservation organisations and individual experts as observers. A part- or full-time Coordinator post shall be based in an organisation or institution, ideally in one of the principal Range States. The operations of the Species Working Groups, including costs of its coordination, shall be financed primarily by their members, i.e. the Range States, and in some cases, if applicable, by their observers. The AEWAs Secretariat should seek to outsource the coordination to organisations/institutions and formalise such partnerships through Memoranda of Cooperation (MoC). Out of the 15 SSAPs endorsed under AEWAs so far, nine have been prioritised for the establishment of a coordination mechanism as well as the Red-breasted Goose SSAP, which is currently in the pipeline.

114. Responding to the question of the Netherlands possibly supporting the coordination mechanism for the Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) SSAP, Mr. Van Dijk reported that a number of activities were already ongoing.

115. On the subject of the Maccoa Duck (*Oxyura maccoa*), where the question of coordination is still not resolved, Mr. Lenten underlined how difficult it is to find donors for the inter-African migrants as the European countries were more interested in supporting species which occur in Europe.

116. Mr. Dereliev concluded that implementation of SSAPs worked best with strong financial support and a good network of experts. The Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) was the best example of a successful coordination mechanism, due to the generous funding made available on a regular basis by the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management.

Agenda item 15: AEWAs Implementation Review Process: conservation of the Sociable Lapwing in Syria

117. Mr. Dereliev introduced Doc. StC 6.12. *AEWAs Implementation Review Process: Conservation of the Sociable Lapwing in Syria*. Resolution 4.6, adopted in September 2008, established the Implementation Review Process (IRP) as a mechanism for assisting individual Contracting Parties that wish to address specific implementation issues, i.e. adverse effects or potential adverse effects on either migratory waterbirds or on their sites and habitats as a result of human activities. The IRP was initially developed by the TC in order to assist countries in implementing the Agreement. The IRP is undertaken by the StC. More information on the IRP as well as the form for submission of issues of concern by stakeholders is available on the AEWAs website: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/irp/>

118. The first IRP case was on the Sociable Lapwing, one of the most priority species for conservation, which was sponsored by the German Government. In 2007 a big staging flock of Sociable Lapwing was discovered in Syria; simultaneously it was clear that there was a serious problem with hunting. In 2009 severe hunting pressure was observed and despite the efforts of the Government and other stakeholders hunting remains a threat. Another factor, which was making the situation more difficult, was the Syrian legislation which was not in line with the requirements of AEWAs. The TC9 decided that a case should be opened and the StC agreed to this. The Syrian

Government was approached and agreed to host the mission in February 2010. The mission was led by the Secretariat and comprised a consultant, a representative of BirdLife International responsible for the Middle East, an expert on the species and representatives of the Ministry. Meetings took place at the Environment Ministry in Damascus and with key national institutions in the provinces where the Sociable Lapwing occurs.

119. The detailed findings and recommendations of the mission were documented in the report under *Species and site protection, Legislation, Data and Information Monitoring and Mission follow-up*. This report has been agreed upon by the Syrian Ministry of State for Environment Affairs. It was established that hunting is the main threat to Sociable Lapwings staging in Syria and that current legislation, although adequate, was not enforced in practice. A number of recommendations were made for the improvement of data and the flow of information in order to support local communities in their efforts to conserve the species. Annual monitoring is urgently needed in order to support conservation measures. Finally all stakeholders – local, district, national and international must join forces to follow up the AEWA IRP mission to ensure that all findings and recommendations are acted on.

120. The Chair acknowledged the importance of well-organised missions such as these leading to better implementation of the Agreement. He congratulated the Secretariat and confirmed the continuing support of the Standing Committee.

121. Responding to questions on the issue, Mr. Dereliev reported that the current global estimate of the population is 5600 pairs. A sound assessment of birds killed annually is, however, lacking.

122. On behalf of BirdLife International, Ms. Crockford warmly congratulated the Secretariat on such a successful first IRP mission and stressed that this could become the most effective tool to support countries in the implementation of AEWA.

123. Mr. Dereliev noted that he would make the report as widely accessible as possible and that a webpage would be designated for this purpose. He suggested that BirdLife International could also disseminate the report through its channels.

124. A number of delegates raised the issue of local livelihoods with relation to local hunting and foreign hunting parties. Mr. Dereliev explained that current information was insufficient to be able to judge any impact on livelihoods, so that data and information were important to start the process of designing appropriate conservation measures, while taking local needs into consideration.

125. In connection with the issue of livelihoods, Mr. Nagy reported on the *Biorights* strategy developed by Wetlands International to fight poverty whereby community members are provided with micro-credit and instead of paying interest, they perform environmental services. Mr. Nagy would be happy to offer his advice on this issue if needed.

126. Mr. Dereliev went on to explain that the Secretariat had very limited resources in terms of human capacity and the other stakeholders together with the Government of Syria would have to start the process. He took this opportunity of thanking the Syrian Ministry of State for Environment Affairs for hosting this mission, particularly Mr. Akram Darwich who was involved in the preparation of the mission and played an important role during the mission as well as during the consultation of the report. The momentum created by this mission together with the willingness of those involved was a promising basis to work on.

127. Mr. Martin-Novella also congratulated the Secretariat on this work and referred to the possibility of further supporting countries in implementing the Agreement by taking advantage of the GEF programme for supporting countries to develop appropriate legislation.

128. In response to another query on the potential impact of a total ban on hunting on cultural practices, Mr. Dereliev explained that the impression of the mission team was that local communities were not dependent on hunting for food and that livestock rearing was well developed. On the other hand temporary bans (40 days in spring and 30 days in autumn) could be implemented by the Al Badia Commission, for example, which has the necessary resources at its disposal.

129. The Chair confirmed that the StC would follow up by sending a letter to the Syrian Government and thereby requesting a report after each field season to enable the StC to monitor the situation. The next StC would look into the necessity for a resolution.

Agenda item 16. Preparations for the next MOP

130. Ms. Courouble introduced this Agenda item and reported that the dates for MOP5 had been agreed upon as being 14 – 18 May 2012. It was planned to precede the MOP with a workshop for francophone African countries. The Ramsar COP is taking place immediately after this Meeting in Romania so that delegates could save on travel costs. The chosen location is La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast, which is surrounded by 10 protected areas, providing a choice of locations for interesting excursions. The MOP would take part at a well-equipped conference centre, with all the appropriate facilities. Hotels, train station and city centre are all close by. The event is being supported by the Mayor of La Rochelle who has offered to supply guides for the nature reserves and electric cars and bicycles for the delegates. He has also offered to host a reception at the town hall. Ms. Courouble took the opportunity to welcome proposals for side events. The theme for the MOP was still under discussion. The report of the first MOP5 Steering Committee Meeting is available as StC information document 6.4⁴.

131. The Chair thanked Ms. Courouble for her presentation and for the excellent preparations made so far.

132. With regard to savings made on travel costs, Mr. van Dijk suggested that the benefits could be shared between the AEWA and Ramsar Secretariats. He went on to ask about the deadlines for the preparation of resolutions as the procedure within the EU is always lengthier than that of individual countries.

133. Mr. Lenten explained that there was no deadline as such apart from the financial resolution which had to be finalised 90 days before the MOP. The goal was to have all the draft resolutions finalised by November 2011 so that they can be signed off by the Standing Committee.

134. Mr. Paixão added that even six months may be too short especially as two presidencies are involved. He proposed having them ready in September 2011 if possible to allow sufficient time. Particularly resolutions with legal implications required a lengthier process.

135. The Chair proposed that resolutions should be ready at least 6 months before MOP5 but preferably earlier if possible.

Agenda item 17. Financial and administrative matters

136. Bert Lenten introduced document StC 6.13 *Financial and administrative matters*, explaining that it gives a financial overview for 2009 and until 15 May 2010. Expenditures in 2009 were not as high as expected because Mr. Lenten had taken up the position of Acting Deputy Secretary of the CMS Secretariat and had been splitting his time between this and his function as Executive Secretary of the

⁴ http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc6docs/info_docs/stc_inf6_4_mop5_preparatory_meeting.doc

AEWA Secretariat. As a result, 60,000 USD were transferred from the CMS to the AEWA core budget. Money allotted for the development of an Action Plan for Africa and for the Small Grants Fund in Africa also remained unspent in 2009 due to the postponement of those activities; this also applies for the Moscow workshop, originally scheduled to take place in 2009.

137. Mr. Lenten proposed allocating the left-over funds in the core (personnel) budget for additional staff required to replace two staff members, currently on maternity leave for six months.

138. The Meeting approved Mr. Lenten's proposal.

139. Mr. Lenten went on to report on the situation regarding the annual contributions received from Contracting Parties in 2009. The shortfall due to unpaid pledges for 2009 and prior years was covered by the surplus resulting from a number of countries, including Ghana and Uganda, which had paid four years in advance. The Secretariat continued to send out regular reminders to those countries in arrears.

140. The financial overview for 2010 was positive so far so that no major problems were envisaged.

141. Regarding the 13% deducted from voluntary contributions by UNEP, Mr. Martin-Novella explained the costs and services covered by this deduction included administration and support staff, recruitment, auditing, management of the pension scheme as well as the staff assessment carried out by Nairobi on an annual basis. He stressed that UNEP strived to keep this absolutely transparent and invited anyone seeking further clarification to contact him and he would be happy to provide any further information.

142. Regarding the pledges, Mr. Lenten thanked all the countries who had contributed to the activities carried out under the Agreement, particularly to France for the generous contribution towards the African Initiative.

143. Regarding staffing, Mr. Lenten reported that in 2009 the position of the AEWA Technical Officer was up-graded from P2 to P3 and that of the Programme Officer from L2 to P2. The post of the Lesser White-fronted Goose Coordinator had been filled by Ms. Nina Mikander; this position was being generously funded by Norway.

144. The Chair thanked Mr. Lenten for the detailed and transparent report and congratulated him for the efficient running of the Secretariat's activities and also for his highly motivated and successful team.

145. Answering a query by Mr. Adu-Nsiah regarding auditing, Mr. Lenten explained that audits were carried out on a biannual and sometimes ad hoc basis by the UNEP auditors.

Agenda item 18. Developments of interest to AEWA

146. In his capacity as Chair of the inter-sessional Working Group on the Future Shape of CMS, Mr. Biber reported that the assessment phase had been concluded in a report by a consultant. The assessment is based on the responses to a questionnaire. The report, which included the elaboration of a number of options for the future of the CMS Family, would be forwarded to the members of the Working Group. A further brainstorming Meeting of the Working Group would be held in Bonn in July 2010 to elaborate three options to be tabled at the next COP, which will take place in November 2011. The outcome of discussions within the Working Group on flyways, which is a Working Group of the CMS Scientific Council will also be considered in this context. All the Parties of CMS and the Agreements will be informed of the outcome. Mr. Biber concluded that Parties could still respond to questionnaires if they have not done so already and their feedback would be considered at the CMS Standing Committee Meeting in November 2010.

Agenda item 19. Institutional matters

147. Mr. Lenten mentioned the signature of the MoC between AEWA, Ramsar, BirdLife International and Wetlands International which followed on from the successful cooperation, established during the course of the WOW project.

148. A partnership with CAFF – *Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna* in form of a MoC was still being discussed. He stressed the importance of the arctic areas as breeding grounds for AEWA species.

149. Mr. Lenten had visited the Secretariat of the Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF Partnership) in Korea, where close links to AEWA are already being established, particularly with regard to the development of Species Action Plans.

150. Having said this, Mr. Lenten also stressed that too many partnerships should be avoided and only those with true added value for AEWA should be established.

151. Responding to a query on the status of the Action Plan for the Central Asian Flyway (CAF), Mr. Lenten reported there was still no clear signal as to what kind of legal instrument would be used to implement the Action Plan, though efforts could be increased now that the WOW project had been finalised.

152. Mr. Paixão requested an up-date on the progress made regarding the Raptors MoU.

153. Mr. Lenten reported that the MoU Secretariat was being kindly hosted by the UAE in Abu Dhabi and the former CMS Deputy Executive Secretary, Mr. Lahcen El Kabiri was now Head of the new Secretariat. Implementation would be taken forward after the recruitment of a new Coordinator had been finalised.

Agenda item 20. Date and venue of next Standing Committee meeting

154. Mr. Lenten proposed holding the 7th session of the AEWA Standing Committee in Norway after the CMS COP in November 2011 in order to save funds.

155. On behalf of Norway, the Chair agreed to look into the possibility of holding the StC Meeting in a government building and confirmed that he would liaise with the Secretariat.

Agenda item 21. Any other business

156. Mr. Mafabi reported on the newly-established Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa (RAMCEA) in Uganda, which would provide the five partner countries the opportunity to work together with regard to AEWA activities.

157. He went on to report that Uganda was in the final stages of developing legislation for the wise use of wetlands; he hoped to be able to report on progress made at the next StC Meeting.

158. This news was very much welcomed by the Chair.

159. Mr. Nagy distributed a recommendation paper⁵ reflecting the suggestions made at the recent International Waterbird Census (IWC) donor meeting in The Hague. He suggested that the AEWA

⁵ See Annex 2

StC and Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) could call on their Parties to urge them to develop an international partnership for the support of waterbird population assessments, as laid down in resolution 3.6., initially for a 3-year project.

160. The Chair noted the helpful recommendation paper anticipating the final report of the IWC meeting in the coming weeks. He went on to instruct the Secretariat to approach the Contracting Parties with regard to this and to request their future support.

161. Mr. Paixão remarked that in para 1 of the recommendation paper, the *European Community* should be replaced by the *European Union*.

162. In response to a question by Mr. Van Dijk, Mr. Lenten confirmed that the Hague Action Statement would be distributed to all the relevant stakeholders with the urgent request for them to take action on the recommendations made. It would also be placed on the AEWa website. He went on to ask all those present at the meeting to disseminate it within their networks.

163. The Chair reiterated that it should be sent out by the Secretariat on behalf of the StC.

164. Ms. Crockford noted that at the end of the 15th Anniversary Symposium, it had been suggested to transmit the declaration to the UN General Assembly in September 2010, when a high-level event will be held to mark the International Year of Biodiversity.

165. Mr. Martin-Novella explained that the correct procedure for submitting contributions to the GA event would be to go through the Executive Director of UNEP.

166. The Chair went on to stress the importance of adapting the messages in the Hague Action Statement so that they are short and manageable for the media and can be communicated in an easily understandable manner. In this way the message that wetlands are there to be protected and not exploited would be planted more firmly in people's minds.

167. Mr. Keil stressed the potential of the issues captured in The Hague Statement and the importance of their quick and targeted communication. The material collected in form of interviews and presentations etc. should be shared and he went on to appeal to all stakeholders to translate the messages held down in the statement into other languages and support the work of the Secretariat by disseminating them.

168. The Chair reiterated this sentiment underlining the importance following up the outcome of the 15th Anniversary Symposium on a national basis and promoting AEWa wherever possible.

169. Responding to the point made by Ms. Crockford, Mr. Keil agreed that the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2010 might indeed be an opportunity for making a strong message on the significance of migratory birds and the role they play in the wider biodiversity.

Agenda item 22. Closure of the Meeting

170. The Chair, Mr. Øystein Størkensen, closed the meeting and thanked the delegates for their active participation in the productive discussions. All those involved were committed to the task in hand and had contributed important views and commented a wide range of activities. He went on to stress the importance of these activities such as the first and very successful IRP in Syria and the 15th Anniversary Symposium, which not only help to raise awareness of urgent measures for the conservation of migratory waterbirds but also have a positive impact on the profile of the Agreement and its Secretariat.

171. He went on to thank the Secretariat Team for its commitment and excellent and impressive amount of work in organising the successful 15th Anniversary Symposium back to back with the Standing Committee Meeting. Last but not least, he thanked the donors for their voluntary contributions, which had enabled the Secretariat to initiate the many activities reported on at this meeting.

Annex 1 List of Action Points

Action Point	Responsible	Deadline
<u>Defining of the role of StC Members:</u> Development of relevant guidelines for the next StC Meeting, in line with CMS.	Secretariat	Nov 2011
<u>Providing Regional Representatives with contacts:</u> Provide the Regional Representatives with contacts to countries in their respective regions.	Secretariat	asap
<u>Urging Parties to support the IWC:</u> Draft a letter to the Parties in cooperation with Wetlands International outlining the relevance and fundamental importance of the IWC for the Implementation of the Agreement.	Secretariat	Asap (done)
<u>Supporting Range States with the accession procedure:</u> Compile a list of potential member countries and make this available to all stakeholders to enable them to support and liaise with those countries regarding the accession procedure.	Secretariat	asap
<u>Fundraising for capacity training workshops:</u> Follow up this issue.	Secretariat	asap
<u>Training Programme for AEWA Range States in Central Asia:</u> Contact Mr. Faser, Iran Ramsar Center.	Secretariat	asap
<u>Providing assistance to GEF-eligible states:</u> Provide assistance to GEF-eligible member countries for the development of proposals to GEF and suggest this in connection with the call for contributions.	Secretariat	on-going
<u>Establishing contact to UNEP Officials offering support to MEAs:</u> Establish contact to these officials in order to use their potential as multipliers with regard to awareness-raising campaigns such as WMBD.	Secretariat	asap
<u>Monitoring IRP Syria:</u> Follow up by sending a letter to the Syrian Government requesting a report after each field season to enable the StC to monitor the situation.	Secretariat	asap (done)
<u>Production of a field guide for Central Asia:</u> Approach RSPB with regard to this IIT	Nicola Corckford	
<u>Disseminating the IRP report through BirdLife International channels</u>	Nicola Crockford	

Annex 2

Recommendation paper on the outcomes of the IWC donor meeting in the Hague, drafted by Mr. Szabolcs Nagy

Recalling Resolution 3.6 on Developing of an international partnership for support of waterbird population assessments which requested support of the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Biological Diversity, regional economic integration organisations, national governments, the European Community, national and international non-governmental organisations, and donor organisations to establish such arrangements for the financial support of the International Waterbird Census and Waterbird Population Estimates and its derived outputs as a means of informing a wide range of national and international conservation policies and indicators;

Further recalling Resolution 4.2 on Responding to the need to improve knowledge of the status of and factors causing declines of some waterbird populations which encourages Contracting Parties and other Range States to develop comprehensive monitoring of waterbirds at key sites used at other stages of the annual cycle (migratory staging and moulting periods), and to submit these data to the IWC;

Noting the findings of the external review concerning information needs, priority products and costs conducted in 2010 and the stakeholder workshop held on 15th June, which both confirmed the importance of the international level information generated by the International Waterbird Census both for the multilateral environmental agreements and for governments;

Further noting that the IWC is one of the fundamental information sources contributing to the newly launched Critical Site Network Tool, developed under the Wings Over Wetlands project, and the timely operation of the scheme is essential to ensure that the CSN Tool provides up-to-date information for a wide range of users;

Concerned by the fact that the external review has confirmed insufficiency of the current funding regime for the proper coordination and implementation of the scheme and that this greatly reduces the usability of the scheme to inform the conservation and sustainable management of migratory waterbirds;

Noting Point 4 of the Hague Action Statement which calls for establishing the above mentioned partnership by the end of 2010.

The Standing Committee

1. *Requests* the Agreement Secretariat to work with Wetlands International and to co-ordinate with interested parties to establish such a partnership as a matter of priority to secure the funding initially for a three-year project, thus facilitating the timely delivery of the Reports on the status and trends of waterbird populations, on the conservation of site networks and gaps in surveys for future MOPs;
2. *Urges* the Contracting Parties and other Range States, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Biological Diversity, regional economic integration organisations, national governments and the European Community to make available sufficient resources for a three-year project starting in early 2011.

SIXTH MEETING OF THE AEWA STANDING COMMITTEE

16 – 17 June 2010, The Hague, the Netherlands

Annex 3

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