



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

13th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
03-05 July 2018, The Hague, Netherlands

REPORT OF THE MEETING

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Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Standing Committee Chair, Mr Barirega Akankwasah opened the 13th Meeting of the Standing Committee.

Mr Lejo van der Heiden, Deputy Director of Nature and Biodiversity at the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality welcomed participants to the meeting on behalf of the Netherlands as host country, followed by opening remarks from the CMS Executive Secretary Mr Bradnee Chambers (via video call) and the AEWA Executive Secretary Mr Jacques Trouvilliez.

Agenda item 2. Welcome and Admission of Observers

2. Referring to document AEWA/StC13 Inf.4 Rev.1, *Provisional Participants List*, Mr Trouvilliez gave a brief overview of the observers present at the meeting.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>All observers present were admitted to the meeting.</i>
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Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

3. Two items were added to the agenda under agenda item 23, Any Other Business: the issues of the loss of insects as requested by Germany and the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) as requested by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The agenda and work programme were adopted with the two additions under AOB.</i>
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Agenda item 4. Proposal for the Revision of Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee

4. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez presented three options for regulating the term length of Standing Committee (StC) members as outlined in document AEWA/StC 13.4 *Proposal for the Revision of Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee*.

- Option 1 - six years with the option of extending to nine years;
- Option 2 - six years without limitation on re-appointment; and
- Option 3 - six years in total.

5. In the ensuing discussion, France suggested retaining the current practise described under option 1, of two cycles (six years) with one possible extension (i.e. a maximum of nine years).

6. France reported that Germany supported option 3, i.e. that the term of office of regional members and alternates shall expire at the close of the next ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties following the session at which they were originally elected, with the option of extension for one further term by the MOP. This option would promote a more diverse participation of Parties in the StC.

7. This position was endorsed by Ghana and Egypt.

8. Algeria and Georgia supported option 2, i.e. six years without limitation on re-appointment. In this context, the question came up whether the same rule applied for the alternates. Uganda also supported option 2 and that the MOP should be given unlimited power to review and make changes at any session.

9. The Netherlands did not have a specific position, however would prefer aligning the procedure for regulating the length of term of StC Members with CMS and other treaties.

10. South Africa reminded the Meeting that the trigger for this discussion had been the inconsistency between Resolution 2.6 and the Rules of Procedure. Thus, any decision should aim to align the procedure. Option 3 was in line with CMS and other MEAs and would therefore be the best option. Continuity was an opportunity to retain institutional memory. It was in the interest of the regions to ensure that they were appropriately represented, in case there were no new nominations from a particular region, the region should be able to decide if the term of office of the current regional representative could be extended. The following wording was suggested:

“Regional members may not serve more than two consecutive terms, unless there are no new nominations for that region and the region decides that they want to keep the current regional representative.”

11. France agreed with this approach, as did Ghana, albeit with the addition that *“as long as the regional members agree on the principle”*.

12. This was agreed upon by Georgia, Algeria and the Netherlands.

<i>Decision and action</i>	<i>Following the approach suggested by South Africa, the Secretariat is to draft a new text, based on the above suggestion.</i> <i>The consensus was that the term of StC members should be limited to two consecutive terms (6 years), however, if after the expiration of two terms, there is no new suggestion for a representative from a particular region, the region may consider requesting the Meeting of the Parties to confirm their existing candidate for an additional term.</i>
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Agenda item 5. Reports

a. Reports by the Standing Committee Members and Party Observers

13. The Chair noted that written reports for Europe & Central Asia, Western & Central Africa and Eastern & Southern Africa had been submitted to the Secretariat before the meeting and were available online.

14. In his capacity as Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, Mr Francois Lamarque highlighted the extreme reporting pressure that AEWA Parties were currently under.

15. In his capacity as Regional Representative for Western and Central Africa, Nana Kofi Adu-Nsiah highlighted the problem of getting feedback from Parties. He was endeavouring to promote further countries to accede to AEWA within the region, which was not easy for an StC member. He urged the Secretariat to strengthen efforts to establish contact with higher level government representatives for this purpose.

16. In her capacity as alternate StC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa region, Ms Nadjiba Bendjedda from Algeria reported on the TSU¹ training to improve efficacy of waterbird counts. Egypt had developed a survey of Lake Nasser with the support of ONCFS. Tunisia has developed a Mobile App for the reporting on the illegal killing of birds, as well as a common database on bird counts, which was updated every year after the mid-winter counts.

17. In his capacity as Regional Representative for Eastern and Southern Africa, Mr Barirega Akankwasah welcomed Botswana as a new Party in the region. The Pre-MOP7 Meeting and MOP7 would both be taking place in the region, in Eswatini and Durban respectively. He also mentioned that he felt that Burundi and Rwanda, currently under the Western and Central Africa region could be best coordinated under the Eastern and Southern African region.

18. Responding to an enquiry from France on the status of recruitment of Angola and Mozambique, Mr Trouvilliez explained that, in order to support the process, the Agreement text had been translated into Portuguese with the support of Switzerland and progress was being made in the case of Angola, however accession was a long process.

19. Responding to a question by Ms Wilmar Remmelts, representing the Depositary, the Netherlands, Mr Trouvilliez explained that Portuguese was not an official language of the Agreement, however, the document had been sent to the Dutch Foreign Office for information. Arabic was an official language, and, in that case the depositary had provided the official translation.

20. Mr Akankwasah also mentioned that the Democratic Republic of Congo had made substantial progress towards accession and would need continuous support to complete the procedure.

21. Representing the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Mr Paul Ouedraogo congratulated the regional members on their reports. What should also be included in their reports were the efforts made by the regional representatives to encourage countries in their respective regions to submit their national reports to the MOP.

b. Technical Committee

22. The Chair of the Technical Committee (TC) Mr Saulius Švažas presented the report of the Technical Committee to MOP7, document AEWA/StC 13.5. He stressed the growing requests from Parties to the AEWA TC after each MOP, which were reflected in the draft work plan 2019-2021.

23. New issues had arisen, such as the conservation status of seabirds and marine pollution. Many tasks could not be implemented due to the lack of funding. He therefore called on Parties to contribute to the work of the TC, wherever possible. He thanked the Technical Committee members and observers for all their hard work and commitment during the past triennium.

24. Referring to task 2.1 of the TC work plan 2016-2018 on harvests and sustainability, StC vice-Chair and regional representative for the Europe and Central Asia region, Mr François Lamarque remarked that the [RESSOURCE project](#), which aimed at promoting integrated management of migratory waterbirds and wetlands in sub-Saharan Africa, specifically dealt with the issue of sustainability of harvest and the outcomes of the project should be taken into account by the TC. The project would be part of a much broader project on sustainable wildlife management funded by the EU (45 million EUR), of which the RESSOURCE project represented the waterbird component. There was a definite potential for important synergies in this context.

¹ The Technical Support Unit to the AEWA African Initiative was established in 2012 at AEWA MOP5, with support from the French Ministry in charge of Environment (MTES). It is made up of personnel from the French Hunting and Wildlife Office (ONCFS), Tour du Valat and Senegal's National Parks Directorate (DPN).

25. The Chair noted that the RESSOURCE project was reflected in the draft TC work plan 2019- 2021. He also reported that a GEF-funded project for Ukraine and Belarus on sustainable harvest would possibly be launched in 2019.

26. The Head of the AEWA Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit, Mr Sergey Dereliev also thanked the members of the Technical Committee, particularly the Chair, for their substantial contribution towards the implementation of the TC work plan. Many of the current TC Members would be retiring at MOP7 and a call for nominations had been launched in February 2018. Nominations were still lacking, and he called upon the StC regional representatives to do all they could to mobilise the nomination of appropriate candidates. The Secretariat would provide them with an overview of the vacant positions and the nominations received so far.

27. He added that in the light of the draft Strategic Plan 2019-2027, not only was there a need for a strong Technical Committee, but also for sufficient capacity in the Secretariat to cover all the tasks. Thus the Secretariat had submitted an application in the framework of the [UN Junior Professional Officer Programme](#) for a Technical Committee Support Officer and he called upon those countries present who were involved in the programme to consider the Secretariat's application.

<i>Actions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Secretariat would provide the regional representatives with an overview of the vacant positions and the nominations received so far.</i>• <i>The StC regional representatives would contact their respective regions and request nominations for the vacant TC positions.</i>
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c. Report by the Depositary

28. On behalf of the Depositary, Ms Wilmar Remmelts reported that Botswana had acceded to the Agreement in November 2017. In addition, the Czech Republic lifted its previous reservations as the legislation had been revised, which was now in line with the requirements of the Agreement (document AEWA/StC 13.6).

29. The Chair inquired whether Austria (present as a non-Party Range State in its capacity as the current incumbent of the EU Presidency), had any plans for acceding to the Agreement. On behalf of Austria, Ms Elisabeth Schneeweiss reflected on the challenging situation in Austria with regard to the process, which includes the agreement of all the provinces, however noted that Austria was considering accession.

d. Report by the Secretariat

30. Introducing document AEWA/StC 13.7 *Report of the Secretariat*, Mr Trouvilliez reported on the activities of the Secretariat for the period between 01 January 2017 and 31 May 2018, highlighting the development of the new AEWA Strategic Plan for 2019-2027, the Plan of Action for Africa for 2019-2027 and the activities in connection with the AEWA European Goose Management Platform. The Secretariat's mandate had increased considerably in the last two triennia and would continue to do so. Without a matching increase in human resources, the Secretariat, which is already overstretched, will be posed with a continual challenge in the delivery of services requested by the Parties.

e. Report by UN Environment

31. On behalf of the Executive Director of UN Environment, Mr Erik Solheim, Ms Diane Klaimi was pleased to be able to have the opportunity to attend the meeting. The Information Note, which had been submitted to the meeting (document AEWA/StC 13 Inf. 3), focused on two issues:

The programmatic issue related to fighting pollution ([Towards a Pollution Free Planet](#)). The 3rd Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA3) provided the opportunity to collaborate on a number of initiatives with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and for AEWA to engage in post 2020 discussions on chemicals and synergies with Aichi Biodiversity targets. The UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats would be invited to participate in the discussions for the roadmap leading to the UNEA Programme of Work 2020-2021.

With regard to finance and administration matters, the next phase of the finance and administration system Umoja would be launched in September 2018. UNEP had now fully implemented UNEA Resolution 2.18 on servicing MEAs. The newest memorandum issued from UNEP regarding the 13% overhead, as well as the trust fund management by UNEP, could be shared with the StC if needed.

32. Mr Trouvilliez requested the UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/EUROBATS Secretariats to be added to the list of MEAs in UNEA Resolution 2.18 *Enhancing the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions resolutions*. This request had already been raised during the UNEA3 meeting.

f. Reports by Other Observers

33. On behalf of Wetlands International, Mr Szabolcs Nagy reported on the workshop on waterbird monitoring, which took place in Turkmenistan in 2017, in collaboration with the Ramsar regional initiative. Work was ongoing with the CMS Abu Dhabi Office, on organizing a coastal wetlands workshop in September 2018.

34. A regional IWC project in West Africa was being carried out with the support of the [MAVA foundation](#). A regional representative from Senegal had participated in a one-month training programme in the Netherlands as part of this project.

35. Switzerland had been supporting synergies between the Ramsar Convention and AEWA. Two projects were being implemented to facilitate these synergies on *Wetlands, Migratory Birds and Food Security* in Senegal, as well as a pilot project to support the implementation of national wetland policy in Burkina Faso.

36. Work would continue with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to guide projects and to submit new projects potentially in Eastern and Central Africa. Mr Nagy recommended that the Standing Committee should support the presentation of the AEWA Plan of Action and linkages with the implementation of Ramsar by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat at the upcoming Ramsar COP in October 2018.

Agenda item 6. Report on the Implementation of the African Initiative and the Plan of Action for Africa

37. On behalf of the African Coordination Unit based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, Mr Trouvilliez presented document AEWA/StC 13.8 *Report on the Implementation of the African Initiative and Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA)*. He went on to report that 50% of the two positions based at the Secretariat were covered by the core budget and a further 50% for the position of Coordinator of the AEWA African Initiative

and 30% for the position of Programme Management Assistant were covered by voluntary contributions, whereby it had been difficult to mobilise the necessary additional funding.

38. The Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the AEWA African Initiative was established in 2012 at MOP5 and offered by the Governments of France and Senegal and provided technical support to the African Range States in various areas, including survey and monitoring of waterbirds and their habitats, waterbird data management and promoting the sustainable use of waterbirds and wetland resources. The Secretariat was a member of the TSU Steering Group and participated in its annual meetings.

39. The Secretariat continued to work closely with the five African Sub-Regional Focal Point Coordinators, who were, for instance, closely involved in the development of the draft AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027.

40. Mr Trouvilliez stressed the importance of the African Regional Preparatory Meeting for the AEWA MOP7 (pre-MOP7), which was kindly being hosted by the Government of Eswatini on 12-14 September 2018 and would provide an important opportunity for the AEWA Contracting Parties in Africa to deliberate on the key issues relating to migratory waterbird conservation to be addressed at MOP7, as well as important MOP7 documents, such as the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027.

41. Mr Lamarque called upon African AEWA Parties to maintain the support for the TSU, because it was getting more and more difficult to find the necessary funds for the TSU operations. A call for the support of the continuation of the TSU could be added to one of the MOP7 resolutions, such as the resolution on the PoAA. He also suggested mentioning the RESSOURCE project in the report on the African Initiative.

42. The TC Chair, Mr Saulius Švažas acknowledged the work of the African Initiative Coordinator, Ms Evelyn Moloko and the African Initiative Unit as a whole, and the fact that it was essential for delivering on the TC tasks.

43. The Chair concluded that the Meeting acknowledged the importance of the African Initiative and the need to strengthen it further.

Agenda item 7. Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information, Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit

44. Dr Trouvilliez presented document AEWA/StC 9 *Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA)*.

45. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque reported that Germany welcomed the work of this unit as a good example of how synergies could function to the benefit of both the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats and encouraged both Secretariats to follow this good example.

46. Mr Lamarque reiterated that this joint unit was a good example and that the UNEP/EUROBATS Secretariat could also potentially benefit, although it could not contribute staff to the joint unit.

47. Ms Rimmels also welcomed this initiative and enquired about the cost efficiency of the arrangement, which was not mentioned in the document.

48. Representing Switzerland, Ms Sabine Herzog had been very impressed at the quality of the work of the joint unit at the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS in Manila in October 2017 and she was looking forward to seeing the same quality of communication work at the AEWA MOP7 in December 2018.

49. Representing Ghana, Nana Kofi Adu-Nsiah also congratulated the two Secretariats, however it would be important to know what the savings were to be able to guide future decisions on similar initiatives.

50. The Chair also welcomed the good work of the unit and recalled [Resolution 6.22](#), which had requested the Standing Committee to review the progress of implementation of the joint unit and to report to MOP7 about the results and experiences of the arrangement and to make recommendations on the way forward. Uganda would have liked to see more information on lessons learned, results and cost savings.

51. Mr Trouvilliez reported that unit members worked according to their own areas of expertise and this functioned well. The development of long-term products was often held up by urgently-required communication needs (such as the Saiga die-off), thus it was difficult to assess the priorities. Efforts were also being made to increase efficiency. There was no cost saving as such; however, more was being achieved with the same amount of resources.

52. Ms Rimmelts repeated that this should be clearly reflected in the report. Moving towards further synergies would only make sense if savings were being made.

53. Ms Klaimi reported that at UN Environment, positions had been established in units and projects for communication officers, which had substantially increased the visibility of projects. She stressed that UN Headquarters was also available to provide communication support to AEWA.

54. Mr Trouvilliez took the opportunity to thank UN Environment for all the support provided, particularly in connection with the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign.

<i>Actions</i>	<p>1) <i>The Secretariat would add a chapter to the Report on the IMCA Unit, which would constitute a part of the Report of the Standing Committee to MOP7, on the cost-efficiency of the joint IMCA Unit. The Secretariat would draft the MOP7 version of the document and share it with the Standing Committee according to the document production schedule for MOP7.</i></p> <p>2) <i>The Secretariat would reflect the requirements held down in Resolution 6.22 in the Report of the Standing Committee to MOP7.</i></p>
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Agenda item 8. Report on the Implementation of the Communication Strategy

55. Mr Trouvilliez presented document AEWA/StC 13.10 *Report on the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy*, which had been adopted at MOP6 to guide the communication work of all relevant AEWA stakeholders with the primary purpose of supporting the implementation of the Agreement.

56. Mr Lamarque requested to have the RESSOURCE project annual Project Newsletter highlighted on the AEWA website. He would contact the Secretariat with details.

57. Mr Švažas noted that there were many mistakes on the AEWA website and that more technical control was necessary.

58. Ms Bendjedda suggested the development of a Facebook page in Arabic since this was the main method of communication in Arabic-speaking countries.

59. Mr Trouvilliez confirmed that discussions were ongoing to help with relevant Arabic translations.

60. Representing the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation in the EU (FACE), Mr Roderick Enzerink suggested linking the FACE webpage on lead shot to the AEWA website. FACE would also be happy to disseminate information about World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) to its network. He added that the page on lead shot needed to be checked. He would send comments to the Secretariat.

61. Mr Nagy agreed that there were problems with the technical content of the website. The AEWA species information data was prepared without consulting Wetlands International on the 5th edition of the Conservation Status Report (or subsequent editions of the CSR) or using the [Critical Site Network Tool \(CSN tool\)](#), or the [Waterbird Population Estimates Portal](#), which could potentially provide that information.

62. It had also been decided through resolution 6.2 that the WMBD campaign should be used for fundraising to support waterbird monitoring, particularly in Africa and low-income countries, however the WMBD topics were announced too late and did not allow sufficient time for necessary consultations with a wider range of stakeholders. This should be considered, when planning future WMBD campaigns.

63. Mr Trouvilliez noted that the IMCA team staff would need to invest more time to be able to follow the ongoing AEWA-related activities and are reliant on the input of other officers. He confirmed that efforts would be made to improve the quality of the AEWA website.

64. Mr Ouedraogo would like to push the message of the Ramsar World Wetland Day via the AEWA website and would be willing to assist with this.

65. Mr Trouvilliez encouraged those present to suggest themes for the upcoming WMBD in May 2019.

66. The Chair concluded that despite certain improvements, the website content needed to be regularly checked and updated and that there should be more collaboration with partners with regard to issues of common interest which could be cross-posted.

Agenda item 9. The 7th Ordinary Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP7)

a. Report by the host of MOP7 on logistical preparations

67. Representing South Africa, Ms Humbulani Mafumo passed on the invitation by the President of South Africa to all those present, to Durban in December 2018 to participate in MOP7.

68. MOP7 was to be held in Durban in the KwaZulu Natal Province. The venue was secured, and the Host Country Agreement, slogan and theme were under discussion. The organising committee, both internal and national had been established.

70. The suggested slogan was: *“Beyond 2020: shaping flyway conservation for the future (or Shaping flyway conservation beyond 2020)”*.

71. Ms Remmelts wished South Africa all the best for the MOP7 preparations and confirmed that the Netherlands delegation was very much looking forward to visiting the country.

72. Mr Švažas stressed the importance of starting support with delegates' visa applications as soon as possible.

73. Mr Enzerink looked forward to organising side events at MOP7 and would appreciate more information.

74. Mr Trouvilliez expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation for all South Africa's efforts in connection with the hosting of MOP7. Invitations would be sent out very shortly. Work on security and logistical issues was ongoing. He urged delegates to make their hotel reservations as soon as possible since December was a peak tourist season in South Africa.

75. The Chair also thanked South Africa, acknowledging the considerable resources required to organise a meeting of this size.

76. Mr Trouvilliez presented Draft Resolution AEWA/StC13 DR14 *Tribute to the Organisers*, which was a standard resolution thanking the host country and acknowledging the support, both financial and in-kind of all stakeholders towards different aspects of organising the meeting and facilitating the participation of Range States.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>DR 14 Tribute to the Organisers was approved for submission to MOP7</i>
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b. Status of National Reporting, analysis of National Reports and final report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2009-2018

77. Mr Dereliev reported that the deadline for the submission of national reports to MOP7 had been 07 June 2018. A few reports were still pending, however to date, 43 reports of the 75 reports due had been submitted, this amounted to a total of 57%. Botswana having acceded in 2017 and the EU were not expected to report. The reports had been checked by an intern at the Secretariat, resulting in eight re-submissions so far. The cut-off date would have to be within the next week or two, in order to be able to commission the analysis of the reports.

78. He urged the Standing Committee to encourage the remaining Parties to submit reports. The analysis was usually done by UNEP-WCMC and 50% of the necessary funds were available, he called upon the Standing Committee to help mobilise the remaining gap. Without the analysis, the report on the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018, which would be the final report for the current plan, would not be possible

79. The Chair also urged the Standing Committee members to encourage the Parties in their regions to submit their national reports.

80. Lamarque pointed out that filling out the national report template consisting of 900 pages was very time-consuming, which was reiterated by Ms Herzog who added that more efforts should be made to harmonise with the UNEP/CMS and Ramsar Convention reporting formats. She pointed out how frustrating it was to hear that so many Parties did not submit their reports leading to an incomplete analysis.

81. Representing Denmark, Ms Camilla Uldal agreed, pointing out the numerous technical issues which occur such as when trying to delegate parts of the format or to save it.

82. Ms Mafumo agreed that reporting against each individual species was indeed time-consuming.

83. Ms Remmelts reiterated the sentiments of the other Parties and added that an improvement to the reporting format would be very much appreciated.

84. Nana Kofi Adu-Nsiah reported that weak internet access made it impossible to use the online reporting tool.

85. Ms Bendjedda agreed that there was very much repetition when reporting on each species and also some bugs in the system making it impossible to make changes and that the PDF printout for sign-off was not easy to read.

86. On behalf of Georgia, Ms Irine Lomashvili reported that the auto-saving function was the most problematic aspect because it did not function.

87. Mr Akankwasah reported that the experience of Uganda had not been very different, having to select all populations one by one and inserting the same thing was discouraging.

88. Responding, Mr Dereliev explained that the template was made of 900 pages if printed out as a regular document. However, the template has been designed for online use and printing of the template on paper was discouraged. When the template is filled out and exported as a report, it will result in a maximum of around 100 pages. The only export required was the “short” version, of the actual report. UNEP-WCMC were reluctant to develop an offline input option. He urged all those encountering technical problems to communicate with the Secretariat as soon as issues arose. The report could be simplified; however, this would mean that part of the required information would be lacking. Without the information coming from the Parties, implementation success and the level of compliance could not be fully estimated.

89. Mr Lamarque and Ms Uldal enquired if there could be an easier way of entering no change of legislation, which applied for the vast majority of species, instead of going through each species individually.

90. Ms Kliami reported that a harmonised reporting mechanism was being developed by UNEP-WCMC in collaboration with the UNEP/CMS and CITES Secretariats.

91. Mr Dereliev noted that harmonisation was not relevant unless mandates are also aligned. The only true harmonisation was with the EU regarding species status and the Secretariat was making every effort to harmonise reporting using the datasets provided to other frameworks with the aim of minimizing the time that Parties have to spend on reporting.

<i>Decisions</i>	<p><i>1) The Meeting agreed that there was room for improvement in the current reporting format and requested the Secretariat to work on a more user-friendly version, wherever possible.</i></p> <p><i>2) Once drafted, the Secretariat should submit the MOP7 documents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>- AEWA/MOP 7.10 Report on the Progress of Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018; and</i><i>- AEWA/MOP 7.12 Analysis of AEWA National Reports for the Triennium 2015-2017</i> <p><i>to the Standing Committee during the first week of September for review and approval for submission to MOP7.</i></p>
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Agenda item 10. Draft AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 and draft AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027

92. Mr Dereliev presented documents AEWA/StC 13.11 *Draft AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027* and AEWA/StC 13.12 *Draft AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027 – A Guide to the Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 in the African Region.*

93. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque reported that Germany, referring to *Objective 2. of the draft Strategic Plan – To ensure that any use and management of migratory waterbird populations is sustainable across their flyways*, doubted whether adaptive harvest management (AHM) was always the best means for the protection of declining species or management of species causing conflict due to the high administrative effort involved. Furthermore, the discussions within the AEWA European Goose Management International Working Group have shown that the application of AHM for certain species may not be in line with the EU Birds Directive.

94. Germany suggested re-wording Objective 2, target 2.4 to read:

“Adaptive harvest flyway* management regimes are in place and being effectively implemented or developed or in place at flyway level in the framework of Species Action or Management Plans* for all prioritised declining quarry populations and ‘conflict’ species for which their application is deemed appropriate.”

95. Accordingly, the wording in the fifth preambular paragraph in document AEWA/StC13 DR2 *Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management plans* should be aligned.

96. Ms Rimmelts agreed with the wording suggested by Germany to change *harvest management* into *flyway management*.

97. On behalf of France, Mr Lamarque remarked that the new draft Strategic Plan was too ambitious, and priorities should be made. Funding was limited; thus, it would be better to focus on certain realistic targets.

98. On behalf of Switzerland, Ms Herzog was very pleased with both the AEWA draft Strategic Plan and PoAA. She felt that priorities should be looked at during the up-coming session of the MOP.

99. Mr van der Stegen reported that the EU welcomed both documents, which were full of relevant activities. He shared the views of prioritisation, linked to the budget available. It would help if the relevant amounts required could be indicated together with the actions.

100. He went on to suggest referring to the document [Larger than Elephants: Inputs for an EU Strategic Approach to Wildlife Conservation in Africa - Regional Analysis](#), produced by the commission, in the PoAA because it could be relevant.

101. Ms Kliami congratulated all those involved with the development of the two documents. MEAs were a vehicle for strengthening coherent national policies in the context of the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs).

102. After further discussion on the wording of Objective 2, target 2.4, it was decided that although it may not be fitting for certain species (in which case it could be amended where relevant), for the purpose of the draft Strategic Plan, the wording was appropriate and should not be amended.

<i>Decision</i>	<p><i>The Meeting decided that documents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>AEWA/StC13.11 Draft AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027; and</i> - <i>AEWA/StC13.12 Draft AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027 – A guide to the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2017 in the African Region</i> <p><i>were approved for submission to MOP7.</i></p>
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Draft Format for National Reports

103. Mr Dereliev presented document AEWA/StC13.13 *Draft Format for National Reports on the implementation of AEWA 2018-2020*, which was more about the reporting mandate rather than the adoption of the format in this form. He explained that discussions were ongoing with the European Commission and that every effort would be made to streamline the format and make it more user-friendly.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC13.13 Draft Format for National Reports on the implementation of AEWA 2018-2020 was approved for submission to MOP7</i>
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104. He went on to introduce document AEWA/StC DR1 *Draft Resolution on the Adoption and Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan and Plan of Action for Africa for the Period 2019-2027*.

105. Ms Herzog suggested adding a point on harmonising national reporting under operational paragraph 13.

106. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque reported Germany's request to replace the words in DR 1, operational paragraph 10. "...to revise, amend and enhance the national report format after each session of the MOP..." by "...to analyse and amend...". Germany was concerned about the increase in the reporting requirements and suggested that the MOP decides about amendments to the reporting format.

107. Germany also requested for the deletion in operational paragraph 11 of "...the deadline for submission of the national reports by Contracting Parties to MOP8 shall be 180 days before the opening date of MOP8" AEWA Art. V (i) required that each report shall be submitted to the Agreement Secretariat not less than 120 days before the MOP.

108. Responding, Mr Dereliev explained that the extension was being proposed for the third consecutive session of the MOP to provide sufficient time for the technical processing of the reports. The legal requirement was 120 days; however, it could not be guaranteed that within that deadline the service could be provided. The extension had been granted for the last two reporting cycles and had not been questioned. The analysis of national reports took at least two months and the report on the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan, one month. At the same time, many reports are submitted with a considerable delay and acceptance of late submissions required additional processing time beyond the 120 days.

<i>Decisions</i>	<p><i>It was decided to keep to the current reporting dates, i.e. 180 days before the opening date of MOP8.</i></p> <p><i>Document AEWA/StC DR1 Draft Resolution on the Adoption and Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan and Plan of Action for Africa for the Period 2019-2027 was approved for submission to MOP7 pending the incorporation of the suggestion made by Switzerland.</i></p>
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Agenda item 11. Implementation Review Process (IRP)

109. Mr Dereliev updated the Meeting on the current status of the ongoing IRP cases, a summary of which would be included in the Report of the Standing Committee to MOP7, which would be circulated by the Secretariat for comments during the first week of September.

110. Bulgaria - Windfarming project adjacent to Lake Durankulak putting at risk the globally threatened Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

Mr van der Stegen reported that the EU had requested Bulgaria to protect all areas relevant for the Red-breasted Goose north of Kaliakra. Should work on the Smin windfarming project resume, the EU would consider opening an investigation.

Mr Dereliev explained that the IRP case would be kept open, however the Commission was now taking the lead and the StC would be updated accordingly.

111. Iceland - Plans for lowland afforestation threatening breeding habitats of AEWA-listed waterbird species

A telephone call had been scheduled for August 2018 with the aim of discussing the revised work plan which has been due for many months now.

112. United Kingdom - Hunting of the Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*)

While the sub-species was protected in Scotland, it was listed as huntable under the domestic legislation in England and Wales. Recommendations from the Standing Committee had been issued the previous week, as well as a request to the UK Government to submit a plan and timeline for their implementation. No action was needed at this point in time by the Committee.

Possible cases included:

113. France – watching brief in the case of a planned windfarm construction in Site d’Arjuzanx in the region of Nouvelle Aquitaine in SW France

The Standing Committee was keeping the case of a planned windfarm construction in Site d’Arjuzanx in the region of Nouvelle Aquitaine in SW France as a watching brief. This was an important stop-over and wintering site for the Eurasian Crane. No IRP case had been opened yet and France has been regularly updating the Standing Committee at each of its meetings.

114. Mr Dereliev also mentioned possible IRP cases in Portugal in connection with an important site for the Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) which is planned for urban development and in Germany affecting the Bewick’s Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*).

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Secretariat would draft an updated overview of the status of IRP cases for MOP7, on behalf of the Standing Committee. The draft overview would be sent to the Standing Committee in September 2018 for review and approval for submission to MOP7.</i>
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Agenda item 12. International Reviews

115. As lead compiler, Mr Szabolcs Nagy presented document AEWA/StC 13.14 *The 7th Edition of the Conservation Status Report (CSR7)*, which was the only mandatory review produced this triennium, due to lack of funds.

116. He reported that the overall status of AEWA populations had improved. However, an increasing number of marine and farmland species were in decline (there was a need to take habitat conservation beyond protected areas), good governance was crucial, and the species recovery plans made a clear difference; achieving AEWA's targets required a proactive approach, beyond mere species conservation.

117. Mr Lamarque proposed a minor modification on p.16, that "...the RESSOURCE project is contributing to rectifying the situation..." The curves in the trends of species were difficult to interpret and he enquired if this was due to the timeline for the change of trends being too short.

118. Mr Nagy explained that the trend periods were for both long-term and short-term trends, For the listing on Table 1 of Annex 3 of AEWA, the long-term trend was being used, unless there was a rapid decline. Fluctuations were removed but needed to be flagged up when potential problems with species occur in order to be able to counteract the trend, if needed.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC 13.14 7th Edition of the Conservation Status Report (CSR7) was approved for submission to MOP7 with the addition of the amendment proposed by France.</i>
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Agenda item 13. International Single Species Action and Management Plans (ISSAPs and ISSMPs)

119. This agenda item was presented by the AEWA Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plans, Ms Nina Mikander, who reported on the progress in the coordination of adopted International Single Species and Multi-species Action Plans (ISSAPs and IMSAPs) and International Single Species Management plans (ISSMPs) focusing on the recommendations to be submitted to MOP7 for extension, revision or retirement (document AEWA/StC 13.20). She also presented document AEWA/StC DR 2 – Draft Resolution on Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Single Species Action and Management Plans.

120. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque reported that Germany was concerned that AEWA intended to put more focus on producing management plans for species causing significant damage, according to the criteria developed by the TC (in Annex II of AEWA/StC13.20). The fundamental objective of the Agreement remained the conservation of endangered species. If AEWA started putting more efforts and resources into the development of management plans for species causing significant damage, this would lead to a shift in the priorities of the Agreement as a whole

121. Furthermore, Germany objected to the idea that the actors taking the lead in the development of such management plans should be from the areas of agriculture and hunting (Annex II, criteria B.5).

122. Germany also had some concerns relating to the EU Multi-species Action plan for Lowland Grassland Breeding Waders and raised the question whether preambular paragraph 7 of DR2 should be deleted. The reasons for this being that despite the conservation status of some of the species being close to extinction, they were still being hunted in other European Member States. It was not consistent to invest efforts and resources in habitat protection and agri-environmental schemes when hunting continued during migration

and in wintering areas. Germany welcomed the good intentions to foster habitat conservation of these grassland breeding waders and respective measures to adapt agricultural practices to their benefit, however a consistent approach including the reduction of hunting was lacking.

123. TC Chair, Mr Saulius Švažas responded that despite certain concerns, this action plan should be taken seriously because the conservation status of many of the species included in the plan would deteriorate dramatically, should it not be adopted.

124. Responding to a comment by Mr van der Stegen on operational paragraph 6 on the retirement ISSAPs and that the Corncrake should not be retired because of an ongoing EU management plan, Mr Dereliev explained that the Corncrake may be a priority within the EU, but not at the level of the Agreement as a whole, thus a balance would need to be found.

125. Camilla Uldal of Denmark suggested that the weight of criterion B6 for prioritisation of populations for management planning with a recovery objective should be higher.

126. Mr Dereliev proposed taking this suggestion back to the Technical Committee to consider a possible revision of the criteria established for management planning prioritisation.

127. Ms Mikander went on to present document AEWA/StC 13.21 *Draft Revised Format for AEWA International Single and Multi-species Action Plans*.

128. Mr van der Stegen commented that he would have liked to see a short rationale on why an action plan was required, which was reiterated by the Chair.

129. Mr Nagy agreed that a short paragraph at the beginning of the plan would be useful.

130. Mr Lamarque considered the time investment for the production of a format for Single Species Management Plans would outweigh the necessity.

131. Mr Dereliev responded that there was a definite benefit for an aligned management plan format to avoid different outputs.

132. Ms Bendjedda suggested putting the threat analysis before the actions and that the costs involved should be highlighted.

133. Mr Dereliev remarked that the request to revise the action plan format had been made in order to be more operational. The assessments and monitoring needs were briefly mentioned in each plan. The plan was at the beginning of the recovery process and the International Species Working Groups were the coordination mechanisms, thus the whole process was quite dynamic. The plans were at strategic level, whereby all the operational work was done at working group level. Plans had a lifespan of 10 years and funding was one of the responsibilities of the working group.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Documents:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>AEWA/StC 13.20 Summary of the Current Status of Single Species Action Plan and Species Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement was approved for submission to MOP7 with the inclusion of the suggestion made by the EU; and</i>
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- *AEWA/StC 13.21 Draft Revised Format for AEWA International Single and Multi-species Action Plans was approved for submission to MOP7.*

a. Draft Velvet Scoter Western Siberia & Northern Europe/NW Europe Population ISSAP (Doc AEWA/StC 13.15);

b. Draft White-headed Duck ISSAP (revision of the 2008 plan) (Doc AEWA/StC 13.16); and

c. Draft Dalmatian Pelican ISSAP (Doc AEWA/StC 13.17).

134. Mr van der Stegen reported that the three plans had been approved by the EU Expert group on the Birds and Habitats Directive (NADEG) and that comments had been received from two Member States. At this stage, only factual errors would be amended but no substantive changes would be made. As soon as this had been done, the plans would be passed on to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The draft ISSAPs for the Velvet Scoter Western Siberia & Northern Europe/NW Europe Population (Doc AEWA/StC 13.15); the White-headed Duck (revision of the 2008 plan) (Doc AEWA/StC 13.16); and the Dalmatian Pelican (Doc AEWA/StC 13.17) were approved for submission to MOP7 pending the final comments from the European Commission.</i>
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d. Draft Barnacle Goose ISSMP (Doc AEWA/StC 13.18); and

e. Draft Greylag Goose NW/SW Europe Population ISSMP (Doc AEWA/StC 13.19).

135. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque reported that Germany was far from being able to adopt these two Draft International Single Species Management Plans (ISSMPs) as foreseen in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution. Germany appreciated the progress made on the draft ISSMP for the Barnacle Goose at the recently-held workshop in Leeuwarden in June 2018 and welcomed the common understanding that management measures had to be compatible with Article 9 of the Birds Directive in order to allow the EU Member States to take part in the process and hoped that the very productive discussions would be fully reflected in the fourth draft to be sent to the range States for consultation at the end of July.

136. On behalf of Denmark, Ms Uldal expressed her gratitude to all the stakeholders involved in the process for their commitment.

137. Mr Dereliev reported that the final versions would be a compromise and called upon the Governments involved to be prepared for this. If positions were entrenched, then any decision would fail. There were quite some negotiations ahead and the focus must remain on overarching principles. All efforts should be made to wrap up negotiations by MOP7.

138. On behalf of the Netherlands, Ms Remmelts congratulated the Secretariat, complementing on haven driven the process and delivered in such a short time frame.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The draft ISSMPs for the Barnacle Goose (Doc AEWA/StC 13.18); and the Greylag Goose NW/SW Europe Population (Doc AEWA/StC 13.19) were approved for submission to MOP7 subject to the finalisation of the drafts following the results of the workshop that took place on 19 June 2008 in Leeuwarden (the Netherlands) and the comments submitted by the Range States in the final consultation round.</i>
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AEWA/StC DR 2 – Draft Resolution on Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Single Species Action and Management Plans was approved for submission to MOP7.

Agenda item 14. Seabirds

139. Mr Dereliev explained that at its 6th Session in November 2015, the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA requested the Technical Committee to produce the following seabird-related documents for the review of MOP7:

- Assessment of the Threats Posed by Marine Litter to Migratory Seabird Populations Listed under AEWA;
- Guide to Guidance on Reducing the Impact of Fisheries on AEWA Seabirds; and
- Advice on AEWA Priorities for Seabird Conservation.

140. The documents had been commissioned to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) thanks to a generous contribution by the Government of the Netherlands. They were still under development and would be submitted to the StC for approval for submission to MOP7 in early September 2018.

141. Mr Lamarque enquired whether the Secretariat had been in touch with the [ACAP](#) Secretariat in this context and particularly due to the potential new activities involved.

142. Responding, Mr Dereliev confirmed that the Secretariat was in touch with ACAP, however the overlap was minimal. Gillnet bycatch was the main problem for AEWA species.

143. The EU, France and the Netherlands felt that this was not a priority issue. Mr Dereliev responded that the Parties would have to decide whether to prioritise this work, which could be relevant for countries such as Greenland, Iceland and Norway.

Agenda item 15. Waterbird Monitoring

144. Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/StC 13.26 *Report on the Development of Waterbird Monitoring along the African-Eurasian Flyways*, which gave an overview of the progress made by the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership (AEWMP) since MOP6, in response to operative paragraph 5 of Resolution 6.3.

145. MOP6 had requested the revision of the *AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 9 on Waterbird Monitoring*, which, thanks to a generous contribution by the Government of the Netherlands had been outsourced to Wetlands International and was still under development. The draft document would be circulated to the Technical and Standing Committees by the end of August.

146. Mr Nagy reported that for certain populations, especially those breeding in the high arctic, it would be very difficult to ever find monitoring methods to produce population estimates. AEWA would provide the best framework for agreement on which extended monitoring could be initiated, e.g. every three or six years.

147. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce document AEWA/StC13 DR4 *Draft Resolution on Strengthening Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds*.

148. Mr Lamarque remarked that the contribution made by the RESSOURCE project (amounting to 300,000 EUR in 2017) was missing in the financial overview; Senegal, Chad, Egypt and Mali had also contributed.

149. Ms Herzog stressed the importance of waterbird monitoring and acknowledged the work of Mr Nagy and the huge network of stakeholders and volunteers in all the range states. She strongly encouraged other countries to contribute to the Waterbird Fund established under the AEWMP.

150. Ms Bendjedda reiterated this thanking the countries which contributed to the fund, as well as those providing indirect support to monitoring activities.

151. Ms Rimmelts noted that the Netherlands is very active in international waterbird monitoring but will not invest in the Waterbird fund as they invest in the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative.

152. The Chair noted that an additional paragraph should be added, expressing appreciation to stakeholders who have contributed in all sorts of ways.

153. Mr Nagy commented that only four countries had taken flyway-level responsibility for their birds in terms of supporting monitoring.

<i>Decision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Document AEWA/StC13 DR4 Draft Resolution on Strengthening Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds, with the inclusion of a paragraph acknowledging countries' contributions.</i>• <i>The countries concerned should inform the Secretariat for that purpose.</i>
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Agenda item 16. Guidance on Implementation of the Agreement

154. a) Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/StC 13.27 *Draft Guidance on Satisfying the Conditions of Paragraph 2.1.3 of the AEWA Action Plan*, explaining that paragraph 2.1.3 of the AEWA Action Plan identified the circumstances under which Parties may enter exemptions on activities otherwise prohibited under the Agreement. The document provided guidance to Parties on satisfying the conditions described in paragraph 2.1.3.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC 13.27 Draft Guidance on Satisfying the Conditions of Paragraph 2.1.3 of the AEWA Action Plan was approved for submission to MOP7.</i>
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155. b) He went on to introduce document AEWA/StC 13.28 *Draft guidance on AEWA's Provisions on Non-native Species*. MOP6 had requested the Technical Committee through Resolution 6.4 to contribute to the development of internationally-agreed standards and guidance for risk assessment with respect to non-native waterbirds, in order to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement. At its 13th Meeting in March 2016, the TC decided, as an extension to this task, to draft guidance on how to deal with the naturalization of non-native species.

156. Responding to an enquiry from South Africa as to whether the guidance referred to non-native waterbirds only, Mr Dereliev clarified that it dealt with non-native species in general.

157. Ms Rimmelts suggested adding a reference to the relevant EU regulation. This would be provided by Mr van der Stegen.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC 13.28 Draft guidance on AEWA's Provisions on Non-native Species was approved for submission to MOP7 with the addition of the reference to the relevant EU regulation.</i>
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158. c) Mr Dereliev introduced the last of the draft guidance documents in the context of implementation, document AEWA/StC 13.29 *Guidance on Taking a Systematic Approach to Responding to Waterbirds Declines: A Checklist of Potential Actions*, explaining that the document complimented other AEWA Guidance and provided an overall framework for assisting Parties and others in planning responses to declines.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC 13.29 Guidance on Taking a Systematic Approach to Responding to Waterbird Declines: A Checklist of Potential Actions was approved for submission to MOP7.</i>
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159. Document AEWA/StC 13 DR5 *Draft Resolution on the Adoption of Guidance in the Context of Implementation of the AEWA Action Plan* acknowledged the mandates and the work of the Technical Committee on the above-mentioned guidance documents and included their adoption.

160. The resolution also requested the Technical Committee to maintain the guide to guidance on taking a systematic approach to waterbird declines, as well as other similar types of guidance, previously adopted by the Meeting of the Parties, as rolling guidance on the AEWA website and to keep updating it.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC 13 DR5 Draft Resolution on the Adoption of Guidance in the Context of Implementation of the AEWA Action Plan was approved for submission to MOP7.</i>
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Agenda item 17. Other Draft Resolutions

AEWA/StC13 DR 6 - Draft Resolution on the Adoption of Amendments in the Interpretation of Terms Used in the Context of Table 1 of the AEWA Annex 3

161. This draft resolution and the background document AEWA/StC 13.30 *Proposal to Amend the Definition of Significant Long-Term Decline to Apply when Classifying Populations in Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement* were presented by Mr Nagy.

162. The proposal was to use two categories of decline, "long-term decline" and "rapid short-term decline". The definitions of both terms were as follows:

- A population in 'long-term decline', is one where the best available data, information or assessments indicate that it has declined by at least 10% in numbers or range over a period of three generations.
- A population in 'rapid short-term decline' is one where the best available data, information or assessments indicate that it has declined at least at a rate that is equivalent to a predicted long-term decline of 30% over three generations based on 10 years of the most recent data.

163. It was considered that the proposed changes would result in more consistency with other assessment systems, the shorter assessment periods would allow AEWA to react to changes in time and separating long-term and short-term decline would provide better guidance to national authorities.

164. Mr Lamarque respected the work of the IUCN but questioned the need to stick to the IUCN criteria for AEWA processes. He enquired as to what would be the consequence of this change and if the new classification terminology could be tested

165. Mr Nagy commented that the EU Member States would benefit from an alignment of assessments. It made assessment work easier (and less expensive) if multiple criteria could be avoided. In this way the system was being made more robust.

166. During the production of Table 1, the annual rate of decline under the new and old criteria was the same. The “rapid short-term decline” was a stricter criterion, so that what was highlighted could be done so with increased confidence – the process became more objective.

167. Representing the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, Mr Mikko Alhainen agreed with this approach. His only concern was that the IUCN red-listing was the only criteria used for the listing of Threatened or Near-threatened categories.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC13 DR 6 on the adoption of amendments in the interpretation of Terms used in the Context of Table 1 of the AEWA Annex 3 and document AEWA/StC 13.30 Proposal to Amend the Definition of Significant Long-Term Decline to Apply when Classifying Populations in Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement were approved for submission to MOP7.</i>
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Document AEWA/StC DR7 - Draft Resolution on Climate Resilient Flyways

168. Mr Dereliev reported that this draft resolution was the result of the work that Wetlands International and other partners had been implementing under the [IKI project](#), which was launched at MOP6 in 2015 and funded by the Government of Germany. Mr Nagy introduced the outcomes of the project and the draft resolution.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC13 DR 6 on Climate Resilient Flyways was approved for submission to MOP7.</i>
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Document AEWA/StC DR8 – Draft Resolution on AEWA’s Contribution to the Aichi Targets and Relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals

169. Mr Dereliev presented this draft resolution, to which an overview of the Technical Committee’s 2018 assessment of the priority needs with respect to AEWA’s contribution to the strategic goals and Aichi Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2012-2020, with regard to migratory waterbirds and their habitats, was annexed.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC13 DR8 on AEWA’s Contribution to the Aichi Targets and Relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals was approved for submission to MOP7.</i>
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Document AEWA/StC13 DR 13 -Draft Resolution on Date, Venue and Funding of the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC13 DR13 Draft Resolution on Date, Venue and Funding of the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA was approved for submission to MOP7.</i>
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Agenda item 18. Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes

170. Mr Dereliev presented document AEWA/StC13 DR9 *Draft Resolution on the Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes* to which the amended Table 1 would be added as an appendix.

171. Mr Lamarque suggested noting that the Portuguese version of the Agreement text should be updated after MOP7 (operational paragraph 4).

172. Mr Dereliev noted that Portuguese was not included because it was not an official language of the Agreement.

173. Responding to a concern expressed by Mr Lamarque that the use of IUCN criteria for up-listing and down-listing AEWA populations was not correct, Mr Dereliev explained that populations had been listed according to the red list criteria since the Agreement came into force. This could only be changed through a proposal submitted to the MOP. For MOP7, the changes to the annexes had been dealt with according to the approved process and could not be changed.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC13 DR9 Draft Resolution on the Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes was approved for submission to MOP7. The concerns expressed by France had been noted.</i>
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Agenda item 19. Institutional Arrangements

a. Standing Committee

174. Mr Trouvilliez presented document AEWA/StC 13 DR 10 on the *Institutional Arrangements of the Standing Committee*.

175. Mr Lamarque enquired whether operational paragraph 2, which simply re-confirmed that the StC should include a member of the host country for the next session of the MOP and a representative of the Depositary was necessary.

176. Mr Dereliev suggested moving it to the preambular part and starting with “*Recalling that...*”

177. Referring to the suggestion to move Israel from the Middle East and North Africa region to the Europe and Central Asia region, Ms Lomashvili commented that this would have no implications and had no objections to the move. There were also no objections on the side of other StC Members.

178. Concerning Burundi and Rwanda, currently under the Western and Central Africa region, the Secretariat would request written confirmation from both countries of their requests to be coordinated under the Eastern and Southern African regions, respectively.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC 13 DR 10 on the Institutional Arrangements of the Standing Committee was approved for submission to MOP7 with the inclusion of the recommendation to change the StC regionalisation of Israel, as described above. Once Rwanda and Burundi confirmed their request, they would be included in the Eastern and Southern African regions respectively.</i>
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b. Technical Committee

179. Mr Dereliev presented documents AEWA/StC DR 11 *Draft Resolution on Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee* and AEWA/StC 13.31 *Draft Technical Committee Work Plan 2019-2021*, whereby a part of the TC work plan tasks were either ongoing or had been carried over from the task adopted by previous MOPs. Where relevant, estimated costs had been prepared by the Technical Committee and Secretariat to provide Contracting Parties with an initial assessment of delivery needs.

180. The Chair of the TC, Mr Saulius Švažas urged all those present to consider nominating experienced candidates for the positions which would become vacant at MOP7, to strengthen the capacity and expertise of the TC, thus enabling the Committee to better cope with the increasingly heavy workload.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC DR 11 and AEWA/StC 13.31 Draft Technical Committee Work Plan 2019-2021 were approved for submission to MOP7.</i>
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Agenda item 20. Financial and Administrative Matters

a. Execution of the 2016-2018 Budget

181. Mr Trouvilliez presented the report on income and expenditures during the periods 2013-2015 and 2015-2018 (document AEWA/StC 13.32 *pro parte*). The budget had been reported on at the last StC Meeting in January 2017, however many uncertainties had still existed at the time after the switch to the new finance and administrative system, Umoja. The figures had since been clarified with the joint UNEP/CMS Administrative and Financial Management Unit (AFMU) and UNEP.

182. It was clear that despite having a positive balance (partly due to a withdrawal from the Trust Fund), the contributions from Parties were not sufficient to fully cover the costs and activities of the Secretariat. The final figures may still slightly differ from those presented because reversals and expenditures for 2018 were still ongoing. A more accurate budget report would be presented to MOP7.

b) Status of AEWA contributions in arrears

183. Unpaid pledges amounted to roughly half a million EUR in total, and to about 300,000 EUR for the current triennium despite the efforts made by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. Mr Trouvilliez highlighted the endeavours made by Sudan to solve the issue of problems with transferring its annual contributions to the AEWA Trust Fund by enlisting the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Sudan. The UNDP Office had proved to be very helpful in facilitating the transfer of the annual contributions

and this could be used as an example of a possible solution for other countries experiencing similar difficulties.

c) Administrative and Personnel Matters

184. There had been no changes in the staffing situation of the Secretariat since StC12. Three support staff members had been upgraded from G4 to G-5 level as decided by MOP6. All P-staff had been recommended for upgrade by at least one level in an independent analysis applying the UN rules and criteria.

185. Mr Lamarque remarked that the arrears in Party contributions were substantial, amounting to around 10% of the budget, which corresponded to the amount withdrawn from the Trust Fund. France had been working with Portugal with regard to the payment of contributions in arrears.

186. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque commented that all voluntary contributions supporting the implementation of AEWA should be listed in the report, including those which were not administered by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, i.e. in the case of the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP).

187. This was reiterated by the Netherlands.

188. With regard to the savings made, South Africa hoped that this has not had any effect on the implementation of the work programme and enquired about the status of the operative reserve.

189. Representing the EU, Mr Joseph van der Stegen enquired about the voluntary contribution amounting to 300,000 EUR, which was currently not reflected in the report.

190. Responding, Mr Trouvilliez reported that Portugal had decreased its contributions in arrears and that seven countries had never paid their contributions since accession. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat was making every effort and also working together with UN Environment and other MEAs to encourage common non-payee countries to pay their contributions. Countries eligible for sponsorship to attend meetings of the AEWA bodies with arrears of more than three years would not be sponsored, as decided by MOP6 through [Resolution 6.18](#).

191. Responding to the issue of voluntary contributions not administered by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and other in-kind contributions, Mr Dereliev suggested adding a special chapter on in-kind contributions to the Report of the Secretariat. The EGMP was a special case with a separate budget; the Secretariat would approach the Parties for feedback on this. Mr Trouvilliez added that the follow-up of the in-kind contributions would start on 01 January 2019, as it was difficult to ask Parties for detailed information on in-kind contributions retrospectively for the last three years.

192. He went on to explain that the operative reserve of the Trust Fund had to be maintained at 150,000 EUR or 15% of the estimated annual expenditure, whichever was higher.

193. Mr Ouedraogo reported that arrears in Party contributions was also an issue at the Ramsar Convention, where many approaches were being tried out. For Parties which had never paid, it could be helpful if the StC were to instruct the Secretariat to join other MEAs in organising joint missions to the relevant countries.

194. Mr Švažas also suggested using diplomatic channels through the Depositary to approach Parties on this.

195. Responding, Ms Remmelts supported the suggestion for MEAs to join forces and agreed to check with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands regarding the diplomatic option.

196. Ms Kliami stressed the importance of the managers of MEAs and those managing SDGs in the countries to collaborate more closely, particularly with regard to the data that the MEAs contribute. All the MEAs should join forces and use the SDG platform to help highlight how important it was to implement and to support them.

197. The Chair requested UN Environment to coordinate the process of recovering the missing arrears amongst MEAs, and the depositary and other AEWA stakeholders to use their diplomatic channels to help the Secretariat to recover arrears. The question of unpaid contributions should be included in the evaluation of global scale funding mechanisms, such as GEF.

d. Draft Budget Proposal 2019-2021

198. Mr Trouvilliez introduced the draft budget proposal 2019-2021 (document AEWA/StC 13.33), reporting that the core budget had not been increased in the last 10 years. Inflation had not been taken into account, nor had the increasing salary costs, leading to a continual decrease in funding from the operational budget. The last three sessions of the MOP decided to withdraw funds from the Trust Fund to set-off the zero-nominal growth scenarios adopted. The Standing Committee would need to decide which scenarios should be submitted to MOP7.

199. South Africa commented that a broader picture should be presented, i.e. what is actually required, in order to be able to better explain the individual budget scenarios.

120. Mr Trouvilliez explained that increasing support towards the African Initiative was a priority and reflected in scenarios 3 and 4. Currently a substantial amount of fundraising effort was focused on upgrading the salaries of the staff members in the African Initiative Unit, since these are not completely covered by the core budget.

121. Representing the Netherlands, Ms Remmelts noted the need for a further scenario, an ideal scenario covering all the needs of the Secretariat, meetings of the AEWA bodies and mandatory reports.

122. Mr Lamarque stressed the importance of being clear, i.e. including the withdrawal from the Trust Fund in Scenario 1, the zero-nominal growth option, of which France was in favour. The scale of contributions was the more difficult aspect and he requested scenarios reflecting the UN scale of contributions.

123. Mr Trouvilliez remarked that the MOP had three decisions to make; on the budget as a whole, the scale of contributions, and whether or not a withdrawal should be made from the Trust Fund.

124. Mr van der Stegen noted that it would be useful to indicate the increase needed in monetary terms in comparison with Scenario 1. He also enquired if Scenario 3 was the only option for increasing the capacity of the African Initiative or if that could be done with fewer funds.

125. Mr Trouvilliez responded that the real increase began with Scenario 3. A clarification would be added to the final document.

126. Representing Uganda, Mr Akankwasah felt that support towards Scenario 1 should be discouraged.

<i>Decision and Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat would re-draft the scenarios so that the countries could clearly see what they were paying for in each case and prepare a further scenario to cover all the core business and relevant Secretariat capacity.</i>
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e. Budget scale of contributions for 2019-2021

127. Mr Trouvilliez went on to present the scale of contributions for the coming triennium. In accordance with the decision taken at StC12, the Secretariat had developed a scale of contribution which returned to the UN scale of assessments, as primarily foreseen by the Agreement, but with a gradual transition period consisting of two MOP cycles (six years). He explained that, since MOP4, the UN scale of assessments had not been strictly followed.

128. Reporting on behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque said that Germany, which was one of the main beneficiaries, was not in a position to support any of the scenarios as yet because they had not been given the opportunity to assess the implications of the transition to the UN scale of assessments.

129. Mr Lamarque remarked that the table presented was confusing and requested a clear depiction of the difference between the previous scale and the UN scale of assessments.

130. Ms Rimmelts noted that a new contribution scale could affect countries that pay more than the requested contribution scale and that it is not certain if the Netherlands will maintain the present contribution if a new apportioning of annual contributions is adhered to.

131. Mr van der Stegen noted that any possible increase of the EU contribution would have to be gradual (a maximum of 2,5% of the core budget). The EU would endeavour to continue providing voluntary contributions.

132. Mr Trouvilliez proposed the addition of a further criterion, to keep the minimum contribution at 2,000 EUR and raise the maximum to 25% instead of 20%. During the transition phase towards the UN scale of assessments, for those countries experiencing an increase, this would happen progressively. Countries which would normally get a decrease in contribution under the UN scale would be able to retain the higher contribution until the full application for those Parties with an increase was in place. Parties would be requested to decrease and increase their contributions in parallel over six years. A new decision would then be made at MOP9.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>A transition process would be started to the UN scale of assessments. Where there is a reduction, contributions would be frozen at the MOP6 level and where there is an increase, a mechanism would be needed to enable this to be gradual.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat would prepare the document and share it with the Standing Committee in preparation for MOP7.</i>

Agenda item 21. Selection of the AEWA Award Winners (closed session)

133. The Members of the Standing Committee met in a closed session to discuss the nominations for the AEWA Waterbird Conservation Award. After the closed session, the Chair announced that the Members had selected the winners of the 2018 AEWA Waterbird Conservation Award:

134. The winners would be notified directly after the meeting and asked if they would like to accept their awards and would be subsequently invited to attend the award ceremony at MOP7 in December 2018. The award ceremony would take place on the first day of MOP7.

Agenda item 22. Date and Venue of the 14th Standing Committee

135. Mr Trouvilliez explained that the 14th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee would be held back-to-back with MOP7 in December 2018. The main objective would be to elect the Chair and vice-Chair for the next triennium. The provisional agenda for the Meeting would be published on the AEWA website.

Agenda item 23. Any Other Business

Central Asian Flyway (CAF)

136. Mr Dereliev reported that together with the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, the Secretariat had received an invitation from the Indian Government to participate in a meeting on the operationalising of the Central Asian Flyway Initiative and to provide relevant advice and support with regard to this process. He requested the StC to provide the Secretariat with the mandate to engage with the Indian Government in an advisory and supportive function.

137. Mr Lamarque reported that France was not in favour of extending the scope of the Agreement to include the CAF. He feared that this would result in a dilution of the already dwindling funds and that the African Parties would lose the most.

138. The EU shared this view. The Netherlands, on the other hand, supported the extension to include the CAF.

139. Speaking on behalf of Uganda, the Chair noted that the benefits would be the coverage of a broader flyway area with the potential of new countries joining, such as China and India. Uganda felt that there would be more advantages than disadvantages.

140. Mr Dereliev explained that a key element would have to be the self-sufficiency of the region, which could not rely on Europe for funding. The Secretariat would minimize the time invested but should be involved, in order to guide India.

141. Representing BirdLife International, Ms Nicola Crockford stressed that of all flyways, the CAF was the only one without a framework and the best way forward would be to extend AEWA to include the flyway.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Secretariat should invest a certain, measured amount of staff time to provide guidance to the Indian Government, with the involvement of the Standing Committee. Any costs incurred, e.g. for necessary travel, should be covered by the Indian Government. A decision on the final elaborated proposal for the operationalising of the Central Asian Flyway would be presented to MOP8 in 2021.</i>
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142. On behalf of Germany, Mr Lamarque reported on the issue of the loss of insects.

143. For some AEWA-listed species, insects were an important food resource. In Germany, scientific long-term monitoring over several decades had revealed a drop-in insect population of up to a massive 80 %.

144. Therefore, in June 2018, the German Government decided to develop a programme for Insect conservation until 2019 and decided on the scope of this programme.

145. Germany intended to inform MOP7 in more detail on this subject and would submit an information document for that purpose. Luxembourg had already proposed a respective [draft resolution](#) to the EUROBATS MOP in October 2018.

146. Mr Švažas suggested that Germany use less pesticides and encouraged other Parties to also look into insect loss, which was a global issue, also because pollinators were at risk.

147. Ms Rimmelts was very supportive of Germany's suggestion. It would certainly help to influence agricultural policy if there was international support.

148. The Chair welcomed this statement by Germany, which was obviously very concerning. The issue would be taken up by the MOP where Germany would provide further information.

Agenda item 24. Closure of meeting

149. Mr Trouvilliez thanked the Government of the Netherlands sincerely for generously hosting the meeting, which had been very productive and paved the way for the discussions at the up-coming 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA in South Africa.

150. He went on to thank the Secretariat staff for their hard work and commitment in preparation of the meeting, both practically and substantially.

151. Mr Lejo van der Heiden, Deputy Director of Nature and Biodiversity of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality thanked all those present for their contributions to the Meeting, which had been very important in preparation for MOP7 and wished the Secretariat and all those attending MOP7, a very successful Session of the Meeting of the Parties in Durban in December.

152. The Chair reiterated this, thanking everyone for the good spirit and hard work. With that he officially declared the Meeting closed.

ANNEX 1 - StC13 Participants List

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