



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

16th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
4-6 May 2021, Virtual Conference Format

REPORT OF THE MEETING

Contents

Summary of StC16 Decisions	2
Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting	3
Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme	3
Agenda item 3. Admission of Observers.....	4
Agenda item 4. Reports	4
Agenda item 5. The 8 th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA.....	7
Agenda item 6. Implementation Review Process (IRP).....	10
Agenda item 7. Outputs of the Technical Committee Workplan 2019-2021	10
Agenda item 8. Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising (IMCA) Unit.....	17
Agenda item 9. Financial and Administrative Matters.....	19
Agenda item 10. Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes	22
Agenda item 11. Update on other ongoing activities	23
Agenda item 12. Institutional Arrangements.....	23
Agenda item 13. Implications from Moving from a 3-yearly to a 4-yearly Meeting of the Parties.....	24
Agenda item 14. Selection of AEWA Award Winners	24
Agenda item 15. Date and Venue of the 17 th Meeting of the Standing Committee	24
Agenda item 16. Any Other Business	24
Agenda item 17. Closure of the Meeting.....	24

Summary of StC16 Decisions

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION
Agenda item 2	Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme	The agenda and work programme were adopted with two minor changes to the agenda and two additions under AOB.
Agenda item 3	Admission of Observers	All observers present were admitted to the meeting.
Agenda item 4	Reports	The StC members took note of the regional reports.
Agenda item 5	The 8 th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWa	Final decision on the date and venue / format of the MOP to be taken by the StC at the end of June-early July. An StC ad-hoc meeting to be convened at the end of July to agree on all outstanding documents.
Agenda item 7	Outputs of the Technical Committee Workplan	Documents approved for submission to MOP with no modifications: AEWA/StC16.9, AEWa/StC16.11, AEWa/StC16.12, AEWa/StC16.13, AEWa/StC16.18, AEWa/StC16.19, AEWa/StC16.20, AEWa/StC16.24, AEWa/StC16.27 (possible update for July ad-hoc meeting), AEWa/StC16.28, AEWa/StC16DR4, AEWa/StC16DR8, AEWa/StC16DR9 Documents approved for submission to MOP with modifications as described above: AEWA/StC16.21 Documents approved by the StC for further use and/or dissemination: AEWA/StC16.8, AEWa/StC16.22, AEWa/StC16.23 Documents to be approved at the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July: AEWA/StC16.10, AEWa/StC16.14, AEWa/StC16.15 AEWa/StC16.16, AEWa/StC16.17, AEWa/StC16.25, AEWa/StC16.26, AEWa/StC16DR6, AEWa/StC16DR5 AEWa/StC16DR7
Agenda item 9	Financial and Administrative Matters	MOP8 to be provided with a clear overview on what would be covered and what would be missing under each scenario. Sound argumentation to be provided for each new post to be integrated in the budget.

		Options to be integrated for adopting a scenario between the scenarios 3 and 4 described in doc 16.31 rev. 1. Stronger text to be provided under the preambular paragraph no 8 of StC16.DR12 rev. 1 to convince that insufficient funding will limit the Secretariat's possibilities to support implementation of the Agreement.
Agenda item 10	Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes	Document AEWA/StC16DR2 to be reviewed more thoroughly by the StC members in preparation for the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.
Agenda item 12	Institutional Arrangements	Documents AEWA/StC16DR10 and AEWA/StC16DR11 were approved for submission to the MOP.
Agenda item 13	Implications of Moving from a 3-yearly to a 4-yearly Meeting of the Parties	Analysis of moving from a 3-yearly to a 4-yearly Meeting of the Parties to be provided by the Secretariat at the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.
Agenda item 15	Date and Venue of the 17th Meeting of the Standing Committee	Next StC meeting to take place immediately after MOP8. The StC's ad-hoc meeting in July will be a continuation of StC16.

Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Standing Committee Chair, Mr Simon Mackown, opened the 16th Meeting of the Standing Committee (StC) by warmly welcoming all participants, noting that there was a packed agenda with some interesting issues to discuss. He was looking forward to a productive and constructive meeting.

2. There was a moment of silence, after Mr Mackown said that it had been a sad year, since three people close to CMS/AEWA had passed away. Nick Williams, the former Head of the CMS Raptors MoU Coordinating Unit; Robert Vagg, CMS's long-serving English language Editor and Report Writer and, finally, Zoltán Czirák, member of the StC and AEWA's National Focal Point for Hungary.

3. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary, also welcomed all participants and reminded everyone to read through the protocol for AEWA virtual meetings (document AEWA/StC16 Inf.7). He reiterated the packed agenda ahead and was appreciative of the high number of participants.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

4. Referring to document AEWA/StC 16.2, *Provisional Agenda*, and document AEWA/StC 16.3, *Provisional Work Programme*, Mr Mackown pointed out that there had been a few adjustments. Agenda item 6, Implementation Review Process, would be a closed session and moved to the end of day 2. Agenda item 14, selection of AEWA award winners, was cancelled because not enough nominations had been received.

5. Mr Mackown continued by adding two points under AOB. These were, first, a discussion on how the StC could work more effectively and, second, looking at some of the roles at the AEWA Secretariat and how they fit into the budget proposal. There were no further additions to AOB.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The agenda and work programme were adopted with two minor changes to the agenda and two additions under AOB.</i>
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Agenda item 3. Admission of Observers

6. Mr Mackown referred to document AEWA/StC Inf.16.6, *Provisional List of Participants*, and welcomed all observers without further ado.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>All observers present were admitted to the meeting.</i>
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Agenda item 4. Reports

a. Reports by the Standing Committee Members (Regional Representatives) and Party Observers

7. The attending StC regional representatives delivered progress reports to the meeting from their respective regions. The reports by the regional representatives on the implementation of AEWA in their respective regions will be available for download on the AEWA website (StC16 page under information documents) for complete information. These include reports from Europe and Central Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa and the Middle East and Northern Africa regions.

8. In his capacity as the Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, Mr Mackown said that he was slightly disappointed in the number of responses he had received from the AEWA National Focal Points (NFPs) in preparation for the report, which were very few. He urged the NFPs present to send their responses after the meeting. Nevertheless, Mr Mackown highlighted some of the new and interesting activities happening in the region, for example the finalisation of Norway's national action plan for seabirds or Sweden's development of a national management plan for large grazing birds.

9. In her capacity as the Regional Representative for Eastern and Southern Africa, Ms Humbu Mafumo described in particular some of the developments and special activities regarding the implementation of AEWA that have taken place in the region. For example, amongst many others, there was the 1st Meeting of the Grey Crowned-crane International Working Group in July 2019, the 3rd Meeting of the White-winged Flufftail International Working Group in November 2019 as well as the 1st Meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group in March 2021.

10. In her capacity as the Regional Representative for the Middle East and Northern Africa, Ms Nadjiba Bendjedda delivered her report in French, which was interpreted by Mr Trouvilliez. She highlighted some activities that have been taking place in the region. For example, she spoke about the monitoring of waterbirds in winter in Libya and legal protection of some near-threatened species and wetland sites in Tunisia.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The StC members took note of the regional reports.</i>
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b. Technical Committee

11. In her capacity as the Chair of the Technical Committee (TC), Dr Ruth Cromie gave a brief presentation on the current composition of the TC, the 16th meeting of the TC and the TC workplan implementation and deliverables.

12. Dr Cromie was pleased to inform all those present that the majority of tasks had been fully completed, highlighted some of them and went on to speak about some of the additional activities and the TC's outreach work in international meetings and working groups.

13. Following Dr Cromie's presentation, Mr Cy Griffin, representative of FACE, mentioned the recent successful TC virtual meeting and said he would welcome more ad-hoc meetings in addition to the formal ones.

14. Mr Mackown thought that the TC workplan and the budget needed to be linked more closely. He noticed that the current budget was not sufficient to even cover the staffing needs of the AEWA Secretariat and that there had hardly ever been a budget allocated to the TC's work. Mr Mackown urged the AEWA Secretariat to take this message to the upcoming MOP and emphasised that there needed to be a stronger link between what the AEWA Secretariat was asked to do and the funding.

15. Mr Oystein Storkersen, representative of Norway in observer capacity, thanked Dr Cromie and the other TC members for the fantastic job they have been doing. He recalled the discussions in January at the TC meeting on how to ensure the continuation of the good work of the TC. Parties should be presented with the list of TC tasks and a more careful look into the fact that there could be some overlap with other initiatives may be necessary.

c. Depositary

16. Referring to document AEWA/StC 16.4, *Report of the Depositary*, Ms Wilmar Rimmelts, on behalf of the Depositary, was happy to report on the two latest accessions to the Agreement: Armenia and Turkmenistan.

17. Ms Rimmelts went on to inform all those present that the late reservation received from the EU concerning the amendments adopted during MOP7 was now accepted and into force.

18. Finally, Ms Rimmelts informed everyone that there was a new publication of the consolidated Russian version of the Agreement.

d. Secretariat

19. Introducing document AEWA/StC 16.5, *Report of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat*, Dr Trouvilliez noted that the report was divided into five sections and that the finance and administrative issues would be covered under agenda item 9. He added that Ms Moloko and Mr Keil would be reporting on the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative and the Joint Communication, Information Management and Awareness-Raising (IMCA) Unit respectively.

20. Mr Trouvilliez continued by giving an overview of the four units of the AEWA Secretariat. He informed everyone that Ms Nina Mikander, who worked as the Species Conservation Officer for more than 11 years, had, unfortunately, left the Secretariat to join the Finnish Ministry of the Environment.

21. Moving on, Mr Trouvilliez told all those present about the general management and recruitment of Parties as well as about the Secretariat's cooperation with other organisations. He highlighted the Secretariat's participation in the CMS COP13 and in three CMS task forces. These were the CMS Multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force, the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean and.

22. Next, Ms Moloko gave a brief presentation on the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, by giving an overview on the three-level coordination, consisting of the African Initiative Unit at the AEWA Secretariat, the Sub-Regional Focal Coordinators and the Technical Support Unit, as well as on the implementation of the African Initiative and AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA), including the process and status of reporting to MOP8 and MOP9 on the PoAA implementation, activities and projects contribution to the delivery of AEWA International Species Action Plans in Africa and activities and projects contributing to awareness-raising and capacity building in the African region.

23. Following Ms Moloko's presentation, Mr Keil gave an overview of the work of the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-Raising (IMCA) Unit.

24. He explained how the unit managed all AEWA related website and online tools, how it supported the AEWA national reporting process and general communication and highlighted the World Migratory Bird Day campaign management.

25. After thanking Mr Keil for having done a great job during the last seven years, Mr Trouvilliez mentioned the Joint CMS/AEWA IMCA Unit was being restructured to increase its efficiency. In this context Mr Keil had new tasks, among them leading the World Migratory Bird Day global campaign.

26. He continued his presentation by giving an overview of the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit's work and its activities by highlighting some of the International Species Working Groups. He went on to speak about the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) which is a project financed through voluntary contributions paid by the range states and, finally, mentioned the current Implementation Review Process cases, that would be discussed in a closed session later during the meeting.

27. Ms Rimmelts complimented the Secretariat for its impressive presentations and asked the Secretariat to elaborate some more on what Dr Cromie had mentioned on the Secretariat's input into the TC work.

28. Mr Dereliev explained that many staff were involved in facilitating the TC working groups, that a number of products had been led or produced by the Secretariat and that the Secretariat monitors the implementation of the TC's workplan, just to name a few activities.

29. Ms Rimmelts strongly recommended including these activities into the Secretariat report, to make it more obvious to Parties.

30. Mr Mackown said that he wanted to see some metrics associated with the impact of the communication activities, possibly as an annex to the document.

31. Mr Trouvilliez agreed to add both Ms Remmelts' and Mr Mackown's points into the next version of the Secretariat Report.

e. UNEP

32. The UNEP Focal Point for AEWA, Mr Rami Abdel Malik, UNEP Law Division, apologised for not being able to attend the StC meeting. Introducing document AEWA/StC Inf.16.4 *UNEP Information Document*, Dr Trouvilliez highlighted some of UNEP's activities related to MEAs and the resolutions adopted during the 5th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

f. Other Observers

33. There were no reports given by other observers.

Agenda item 5. The 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA

a. Date and Venue / Format

34. Mr Trouvilliez introduced document AEWA/StC 16.7, *Note of the Secretariat Regarding the Date and Format of MOP8 in the Context of COVID-19*, by outlining the four different possible scenarios and their implications.

35. Following Mr Trouvilliez' introduction, Mr Gábor Magyar, representative of Hungary, explained that the MOP would be part of a series of congresses at the One with Nature Exhibition in Budapest, Hungary. He assured all those present that the Government of Hungary was going full steam ahead with the preparations, as they were very optimistic, since the COVID-19 cases in Hungary had been declining rapidly.

36. Mr Magyar thought that a decision should not be taken too early in order to be able to evaluate the developments of the pandemic properly. He further emphasised that the exhibition would be a great opportunity to bring hunters and nature conservationists closer together and that a virtual meeting would mean missing out on that.

37. After a brief discussion on option three, the hybrid scenario, it was quickly decided to disregard it, since it was not inclusive and those parties not able to attend would be at a disadvantage.

38. Following further discussions on the pros and cons of the other options, Mr Mackown wondered if it was feasible to adopt an interim one-year budget, should the MOP have to be postponed beyond 2021.

39. Mr Trouvilliez concluded that there were three options: to have an in-person MOP in 2021, to have a virtual MOP in 2021 or, should the MOP have to be postponed beyond 2021, to adopt by the end of December 2021 an interim one-year budget. The Chair proposed to discuss these three options at end of June-early July, for the StC to make a final decision.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Final decision on the date and venue / format of the MOP to be taken by the StC at the end of June-early July.</i>
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b. National Reporting and Strategic Plan 2019-2027 Implementation

40. Mr Dereliev informed the StC on the outcome of the first ever national reporting cycle of the module on the status of populations of AEWA-listed waterbirds, which was run earlier in the triennium with a deadline of 30 June 2020 in order to utilise the dataset for the preparation of the 8th edition of the Conservation Status Report. Only 43 out of 79 due reports were submitted (54%). The quality of some reports was neither sufficient nor usable; this issue needs to be addressed through training national respondents for the next reporting cycle. For the EU Members States, reporting on this module was not required, since the module had been aligned with the templates and reporting period of the reporting on Article 12 of the EU Birds Directive. The Article 12 dataset had been provided to the Secretariat by the European Commission.

41. Mr Dereliev further updated the StC on the status of the National Reporting cycle to MOP8 on the implementation of the Agreement and its Strategic Plan, which resulted in 67% submission rate (55 of 79 due reports), but only 10 reports (12%) by the official deadline. This corresponded to the usual reporting rate of past cycles. Due to capacity issues, the Secretariat could not perform in this cycle a detailed examination of the submitted reports in view of improving their completeness. Instead, a quick check on some parts of the reports was undertaken and where issues were identified they were communicated to the reporting Party. Following this, Ms Moloko gave an update on the reporting on the implementation of the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) to MOP8.

42. Mr Dereliev noted that the quality of reports as well as the late submissions needed to be addressed, possibly through training of national respondents. He added that the report analysis has been commissioned to UNEP-WCMC and will be submitted to the StC once ready and no later than end of July to comply with the MOP8 document deadline.

43. Ms Rimmelts asked whether there were reasons that some countries were late with their submissions and said that the reporting burden was to some extent very high.

44. Mr Dereliev responded that the AEWA Secretariat had no overview of the reasons as this would require a specific inquiry to be sent out to the CPs and added that the AEWA Secretariat always strived to launch the reporting cycle as early as possible to allow parties to start compiling their reports early on. This cycle was launched in August 2020, while the submission deadline was in April 2021, providing nearly nine months for compiling the national reports. Mr Dereliev considered that one of the issues may be the lack of online facilities in some countries but pointed out that the template had been optimised with offline solutions for some questions. Further to that, all the information from the previous national report is exported into the template of the new report; CPs need to fill out only the fields for the newly-introduced questions and verify the validity of the previously provided information.

45. Ms Herzog stated that the national reporting had gotten a lot easier due to the offline solution for certain questions and thanked the AEWA Secretariat for it. She added that the burden did not only lie with the national reporting but also with the general workload, which was increasing. Finally, Ms Herzog asked the AEWA Secretariat how complete reports were that had been submitted so far and

whether they were complete enough in order to do a thorough analysis and comparison. She further wondered whether simplifying the reporting would help in receiving more reports.

46. Mr Dereliev explained that unfortunately in this cycle an intern could not be hired to support the Secretariat with reviewing the reports submitted. Therefore, the Secretariat could not confirm how comprehensive the national reports were. From a quick check of the reports, Mr Dereliev was able to say that a good proportion seemed to be comprehensive, but there were others not as thoroughly filled out. It was not only about how many questions were responded to, but whether the reporting work was well planned and implemented diligently. Despite the extensive reporting template, there was not necessarily enough level of detail to be able to assess well enough why things are progressing or why not. Therefore, simplifying the reporting template would not help with monitoring the implementation process of the Strategic Plan and of the Agreement as a whole.

c. Status of Document Production

47. Mr Dereliev continued, by giving the StC an update on the status of document production.

48. He explained that most of the documents initiated had been receiving sufficient resources. However, there was a gap of 10,000 EUR, which the Government of Germany generously offered to close. This funding would go into the finalisation of the National Report analysis.

49. Mr Dereliev acknowledged that a number of documents were late and that even some of the StC16 documents were not final. He assured that no document would be submitted to the MOP without the StC reviewing and approving it beforehand.

50. Mr Mackown suggested a half-day (or a day) ad-hoc meeting of the StC at the end of July to agree on all outstanding documents, which Mr Trouvilliez agreed to.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>An StC ad-hoc meeting to be convened at the end of July to agree on all outstanding documents.</i>
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51. Before continuing with the next agenda item, Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, addressed the meeting through a brief contribution.

52. Ms Fraenkel mentioned that it was her first time joining an AEWA Meeting and that it was a pleasure to attend. She highlighted the excellent working relationship between the CMS and the AEWA Secretariats on multiple fronts, including on programmatic cooperation, on the joint communications work as well as on administrative and management matters.

53. Ms Fraenkel continued to thank Mr Trouvilliez and his team for their support and cooperation over the months since she had joined CMS as Executive Secretary.

54. She emphasised the excellent work being done under AEWA including some innovative management initiatives that address transboundary and regional conservation. Ms Fraenkel highlighted the AEWA Secretariat's recent great achievement on the ban of lead shot.

55. Ms Fraenkel reminded everyone that the AEWA Secretariat was an active member of the CMS Task Forces, namely the Energy Task Force and the Task Force on the Illegal Killing of Birds and that it also participated in the Bird Poisoning Working Group.

56. Finally, Ms Fraenkel hoped that the Parties would provide the AEWA Secretariat with the necessary resources through the upcoming budget discussions.

57. Ms Fraenkel concluded by saying that the work of AEWA, CMS as well as other parts of the CMS Family was more important than ever. These were the only UN Conventions that addressed the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species and their habitats.

58. With that, Ms Fraenkel wished everyone a successful and fruitful meeting.

Agenda item 6. Implementation Review Process (IRP)

-CLOSED SESSION as decided by the StC members (please see paragraph 4 above)-

Agenda item 7. Outputs of the Technical Committee Workplan 2019-2021

a. Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of AEWA Waterbird Species

59. Upon introducing document AEWA/StC 16.8 *Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of the Common Eider*, Mr Dereliev explained that this document had already been submitted and approved by the StC at its 15th meeting and that this revised version had only one small proposed amendment with respect to the affiliation of the Orkney islands population.

60. Since there were no comments, Mr Mackown concluded that everyone was in agreement with the proposed revised delineation of the Common Eider populations.

b. 8th Edition of the Conservation Status Report (CSR8)

61. Mr Dereliev and Mr Szabolcs Nagy, representative of Wetlands International and chief compiler of CSR8, introduced document AEWA/StC 16.9 *Draft Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area (8th edition)*.

62. Since there were no comments, the document was approved for submission to the MOP.

c. International Single Species Action and Management Plans (ISSAPs and ISSMPs)

63. Introducing document AEWA/StC 16.10 *Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Common Eider*, Mr Dereliev noted that only two sets of feedback had been received: one from the European Commission and one from Finland. These were, however, contradictory. Mr Dereliev, therefore, urged the EU to provide a coordinated version.

64. Ms Iva Obretenova, representative of the European Commission, thanked all those involved for the work on the document and appreciated that it had been a long process. She committed to securing a common position of the EU ahead of the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.

65. Mr Mackown invited the EC to consult the AEWA Secretariat during the process, which would avoid more lengthy consultations.

66. Mr Dereliev concluded that the Secretariat's understanding now was that the document was put on hold in expectation of the revised proposal from the EU to be consulted with the relevant non-EU parties.

67. Moving on, Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/StC 16.11 *Draft Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Management Plans*.

68. Since there were no comments, the document was approved for submission to the MOP.

69. After Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/StC 16.12 *Draft Revised Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Action Plans*, Mr Mackown said that he was concerned about having FRVs for each Range State. He wondered whether this would risk significant delays in developing action plans, since this was quite a timely and costly process. Some Parties may not have the resources.

70. Mr Dereliev responded that the Secretariat was suggesting the timing of setting FRVs in the action plans to be flexible. If the resources were available during the compilation phase, setting the FRVs should be done then. If that was not possible, the other option would be to set them during the first round of implementation of the action plan. That would not delay the finalisation of a draft action plan.

71. Ms Rimmelts thought that the request for FRVs was quite a difficult task, looking at the experience made with the EGMP. In the case of action plans with species that had to recover, it looked like a target was being set for the future, because a favourable reference status wanted to be achieved. She did not think it was wise on a political level to set a target. However, since it was presented in the document as one of the options, Ms Rimmelts thought it was acceptable, as it could be decided for each plan individually whether it was feasible. She thought the document could be approved in anticipation of further comments.

72. Mr Nagy pointed at the practical example of the Common Eider. This was a species with an action plan to be submitted to the MOP for approval. It aimed at restoring the population to a favourable conservation status. It was recognised that it was not possible at this point to define what the favourable reference values would be. The plan allowed for a 5-year period to look at the FRVs. He reiterated that there would indeed be sufficient time in the first implementation period to collect the information needed.

73. Mr Dereliev added that the fact that setting FRVs had not been done so far, did not justify not doing it in the future and it should not be seen as optional. If the FRVs for the respective populations listed under AEWA were not known, there would be no way of measuring whether the Parties and the Agreement as a whole were actually achieving its paramount objective of maintaining migratory waterbirds species in a favourable conservation status. There was an intention to provide jointly with the European Commission a clearer, more understandable and more consolidated guidance on setting FRVs for bird species.

74. Mr Mackown concluded that the document should go forward to the MOP as it was but emphasised that he was anticipating some difficult and challenging discussions.

75. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce document AEWA/StC 16.13 *Draft Summary of the Current Status of Single Species Action and Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement*.

76. Since there were no comments, the document was approved for submission to the MOP.

77. Mr Dereliev continued by introducing document AEWA/StC16 DR4 *Draft Resolution on Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans*.

78. Ms Remmelts raised the fact that it had been discussed at the TC meeting in January 2021 to have a 3-year period for the revision of the LWfG ISSAP in order to take into account the genetic study on the Swedish population. She said that she would like to have that information included into the document.

79. In response, Mr Dereliev clarified that there had indeed been a discussion at the recent TC meeting, but that there had not been an agreement on defining a text that would clarify the matter. The document was a product of the discussion during the recent TC meeting based on the in-session version of the draft resolution.

80. Mr Schall said that he had taken part in the Working Group for the LWfG. In this working group one of the important issues was that Sweden should publish a peer reviewed study on the genetic purity of their population. Since Sweden had now done this, Mr Schall thought that it should be taken into account.

81. Although recognising the issue, Mr Mackown said that he felt uncomfortable supporting documents that the TC has not endorsed and emphasised that the role of the StC was not a technical one. As such it should not be offering an opinion on technical documents that the TC has not agreed to.

82. Mr Dereliev reiterated that the text was agreed at the TC meeting. Therefore, if the StC wanted to modify the text, which has not been agreed to by the TC, it would be a modification that the StC would do on its own.

83. Ms Obretenova informed everyone that the European Commission did not support the 3-year extension period for the LWfG ISSAP and instead would like to propose a 1-year extension. The European Commission thought that the fact that the Swedish population was not included under AEWA was a major anomaly between the Agreement and the Birds Directive.

84. Mr Storkersen said that Norway did not support the statement that all issues on the genetics had been solved. This was stated on the slide shown during Ms Obretenova's previous intervention. There was still ongoing work to look into the article published by Sweden, which Norway contested, more closely and in a scientific manner. The slide furthermore stated that there was a lesser importance related to the modification of the flyway, which Norway also opposed to. Norway would like to support the prolongation of the LWfG ISSAP as suggested and approved by the TC.

85. Mr Mackown concluded that the DR would have to be passed on as it was to the MOP and suggested to try and resolve the issue at a meeting to be convened in advance of the MOP in October. Everyone agreed to this suggestion.

d. Waterbird Monitoring

86. Both Mr Dereliev and Mr Nagy introduced document AEWA/StC 16.14 *Draft Monitoring Priorities for Waterbird Species and Populations of AEWA*. This document was the version presented at the TC meeting in January 2021 outlining the approach to identifying priorities which was agreed, and now the full document was under preparation.

87. Mr Mackown thought that it was an excellent document clearly setting out some of the gaps in monitoring.

88. Ms Remmelts agreed with Mr Mackown. She wondered whether a text about the funding of the future process of this type of monitoring could be added, since the process, which was costly, would last many years.

89. Mr Mackown agreed that a text should be added either to the document or to the draft resolution and said that it should be finalised at the ad-hoc meeting in July.

90. Upon introducing document AEWA/StC 16.15 *Draft Waterbird Monitoring Synergies with other Frameworks*, Mr Dereliev suggested the document be circulated to the other frameworks involved in waterbird monitoring, finalised on the basis of received feedback and then submitted to the MOP.

91. After a brief discussion on the importance of synergies with other frameworks, Mr Mackown was happy for the AEWA Secretariat to take the document forward for further consultation with the identified frameworks.

92. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce document AEWA/StC16 DR5 *Draft Resolution on Further Development and Strengthening of Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds*.

93. Following some discussions, Mr Mackown concluded that the text of operative paragraphs 6 and 7 may need to be amended depending on the synergies document and that the language needed to be strengthened. Further to that The Netherlands and UK would work on revising the wording of operative paragraph 8. The revised draft resolution would be considered again at the ad-hoc meeting in the end of July.

e. AEWA Flyway Site Network

94. Mr Dereliev and Mr Nagy introduced document AEWA/StC 16.16 *Draft Monitoring Framework for the AEWA Flyway Site Network*.

95. Mr Schall asked why it was necessary to introduce a site reporting under AEWA given that the Ramsar Convention was designated to report on wetlands. AEWA was seen as a species agreement and the Ramsar Convention as a site agreement. Therefore, there was a concern that AEWA was going in the wrong direction.

96. Mr Dereliev clarified that AEWA was not just species treaty, but a comprehensive one that covered all aspects of waterbird conservation. Narrowing its work down only to species conservation would not lead to achieving the objectives of the treaty and fulfilling the obligations of the Parties under the legal text. Stock-taking of the Strategic Plan, that had been agreed to by all CPs, was needed as it specified what activities are to be implemented with respect to legal provisions of the Agreement,

in this case on site conservation. Furthermore, there is an obligation of providing a regular update on the status of the AEWA site network; the AEWA site network went beyond that of Ramsar which covers only wetlands, and only those of international importance and amongst them only those which were in fact designated as Ramsar sites. As such, the site reporting was not a duplication but an expansion of what already existed under the other frameworks.

97. Mr Schall thanked Mr Dereliev for the clarification. However, concerning EU Natura 2000 network and the Emerald Network of the Bern Convention, Mr Schall asked Mr Nagy if he had the possibility to use that data so that the European States under the Bern Convention did not have to double or triple report.

98. Mr Nagy responded that the system was designed in a way that the collected data for a Special Protection Area, in the context of the Birds Directive, could be used directly to report to AEWA. However, the Secretariat would not have direct access to that data without consultation with the CP because the data may have to be updated. It did not present an additional reporting burden.

99. Mr Storkersen stated that the proposal to establish a monitoring system was causing worries for Norway. The EU as well as the Emerald Network had their 6-year reporting cycle and it has provided an insight into what burden it implies. Mr Storkersen's message to all Parties was that wetlands should be protected better and that a system was needed to increase the value and international focus on these sites. In respect of the confirmation of the national inventory of sites of international and national importance, politically they were facing issues with recognising the Important Bird Areas identified by the national partner of BirdLife International even if their identification was funded by the government.

100. He, furthermore, pointed at DR6, operative paragraph 6 and said that as a minimum it should be replaced by an instruction for the TC to develop a monitoring protocol. He added that it would ease the situation if the discussions were slowed down. There should be interaction with all Parties intersessionally in order to share ideas on how it could be implemented. Even West European countries would face problems implementing this monitoring and reporting system.

101. Although appreciating the importance of wetland sites, Ms Herzog was concerned about the additional burden the site monitoring and reporting entailed. She agreed with Mr Storkersen to slow down the discussions. She stressed that there was a need to consider how to establish an integrated monitoring process beyond waterbirds alone.

102. Ms Rimmelts agreed with Ms Herzog and Mr Storkersen. She pointed out that the Netherlands still has not submitted to the Secretariat their national site inventory and the request they received from the Secretariat had created discussions internally on why an AEWA site network was needed. From the feedback shared at the TC meeting in January it was clear that only 11 countries had submitted their site inventories by then. As this was the basis on which to develop monitoring and reporting it was first necessary to conclude the site inventory exercise and establish the site network before proceeding further on the monitoring. She used the metaphor: Moving on with monitoring before the site inventory is completed feels like driving a train and forgetting to take the passengers on board. She also pointed out that there were also some inaccuracies, e.g. the Standard Data Form for EU Natura 2000 sites did not imply a reporting obligation. Overall, the presented document with the proposal for the monitoring and reporting system was reasonable, but there were some minor details that were incorrect and would need to be adjusted.

103. Mr Van der Stegen said that the European Commission supported the idea of AEWA maintaining a network of sites beyond the EU Natura 2000 and the Bern Convention Emerald network, but that before monitoring and reporting it would be necessary to establish the site network and that a simple exercise could be run to identify the existence of sites along the flyway

104. Mr Mackown reported that they had similar considerations in the UK and although they submitted their national site inventory, they had difficulties in compiling it and it is incomplete. He suggested that the StC should consider the document and the draft resolution separately from each other since the document needed some minor adjustments while the draft resolution would require rethinking by the StC.

105. Mr Dereliev, reflecting on points made by Parties, reminded that the site network in fact existed and was presented through the Critical Site Network tool. The ongoing process of site inventory reconfirmation by the Parties and the Non-Party Range States aimed at refining this existing network and filling existing gaps. The proposal presented in the document did not establish a completely new monitoring system but consolidated what had been already established under other frameworks. The approach taken in this proposal for a monitoring and reporting framework proposal was minimalistic and was scaled down from what Parties were supposed to implement under the other frameworks. He emphasised that postponing the finalisation of the document would lead to a failure of meeting the commitments under the Strategic Plan. He thought a longer implementation timeframe could be discussed, but strongly recommended pursuing the finalisation of the document in time for MOP8.

106. After further discussion, it was decided to submit within two weeks specific comments on the document by the StC to the Secretariat to allow for its finalisation before submitting to MOP8. The draft resolution, in particular operative paragraphs 1, 4 and 6 would be revised by the StC for further review at the ad-hoc meeting at the end of July.

f. Knowledge Gaps and Needs Relevant for the Implementation of the Agreement

107. Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/StC 16.17 *Overview of Knowledge Gaps and Needs Relevant for the Implementation of AEWA*.

108. Mr Mackown noted what an excellent draft document it was and asked the StC members to provide comments to the Secretariat in advance of the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.

109. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce document AEWA/StC16 DR7 *Draft Resolution on Improving the Base of Knowledge for Effective Waterbird Conservation and Management*.

110. Mr Mackown thought that operative paragraph 3 was too weak and should explicitly ask parties what they needed to do. He furthermore stated that operative paragraphs 4 and 6 were clearly linked and that a text should be added making that clear.

111. Ms Herzog asked for a clarification on paragraph 2, as she did not quite understand how the Secretariat came to the conclusions listed.

112. Mr Dereliev said that the Secretariat would provide clarification on the conclusions and was content with strengthening the language in paragraph 3 and linking paragraphs 4 and 6, as suggested by Mr Mackown.

113. Mr Mackown concluded that there would be a revised draft resolution for the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.

g. Guidance on Implementation of the Agreement

114. Since there were no comments on documents AEWA/StC 16.18 *Draft Revised AEWA Conservation Guidelines No.1*, AEWA/StC 16.19 *Managing Waterbird Disturbance: a Short Guide for Wetland Managers* and AEWA/StC 16.20 *Draft Initial Guidance on Ecosystem Services in Relation to Migratory Waterbirds*, after they were introduced by Mr Dereliev, Mr Mackown concluded that all three documents were approved for submission to the MOP.

115. Mr Dereliev continued by introducing document AEWA/StC 16.21 *Draft Guidance on Addressing the Risk of Accidental Shooting of Look-Alike Species of Waterbirds in the Agreement Area*.

116. Following a brief discussion about the wording on page 5 under section 5 *Ensure Enforcement of Hunting Legislation*, it was agreed to maintain the first sentence and add a text on Parties, if possible and appropriate, to consider implementing protection for similar looking species.

117. With this change, the document was approved for submission to the MOP.

118. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce documents AEWA/StC 16.22 *Draft Concept for Dissemination of Information Supplementary to Conservation Guidelines* as well as AEWA/StC16 DR8 *Draft Resolution on Revision and Adoption of Conservation Guidance*.

119. Following some brief discussions, document AEWA/StC16.22 was approved for further use and document AEWA/StC16 DR8 was approved for submission to the MOP.

h. Other Documents and Resolutions

120. Since there were no comments on document AEWA/StC 16.24 *Draft Format on National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2021-2023*, after it was introduced by Mr Dereliev, the document was approved for submission to the MOP.

121. After document AEWA/StC 16.25 *Draft Format for National Reporting Module on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2021-2023* was introduced by Ms Moloko, it was agreed that, in the absence of any immediate comments, any subsequent comments submitted to the Secretariat in writing within the two-week document review deadline following the StC16 meeting, would be accepted by the Secretariat for finalisation of the draft MOP9 PoAA reporting format for re-submission to the ad-hoc StC meeting in July.

122. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce document AEWA/StC 16.26 *AEWA's Contribution to the Aichi Targets 2011-2020*.

123. Since there were no immediate comments, Mr Mackown suggested they could be provided to the Secretariat by 23 May for finalisation at the ad-hoc meeting in July, which everyone agreed to.

124. Document AEWA/StC 16.27 *Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework* was introduced by Mr Dereliev.

125. Since there were no comments, Mr Mackown concluded that the document was approved for submission to the MOP, noting that if any updates were made it will be submitted to the ad-hoc meeting in July.

126. Both documents AEWA/StC 16.28 *The Relevance of AEWA to Delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals* and AEWA/StC16 DR9 *Draft Resolution on AEWA’s Past Contribution to Delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets* were approved for submission to the MOP, since there were no comments following their introduction by Mr Dereliev.

127. Mr Dereliev continued by introducing document AEWA/StC16.23 *Establishing Criteria and a Priority List of Quarry Populations for Harvest Data Collection*.

128. Following a brief discussion on the reporting requirements, Mr Mackown concluded that the document was approved for further use and dissemination to the Parties, noting the further development that the Secretariat highlighted in relation to the guidance on how to collect harvest data which the TC will work on it the next triennium.

<i>Decisions</i>	<p><i>Documents approved for submission to MOP with no modifications:</i> AEWA/StC16.9, AEWA/StC16.11, AEWA/StC16.12, AEWA/StC16.13, AEWA/StC16.18, AEWA/StC16.19, AEWA/StC16.20, AEWA/StC16.24, AEWA/StC16.27 (possible update for July ad-hoc meeting), AEWA/StC16.28, AEWA/StC16DR4, AEWA/StC16DR8, AEWA/StC16DR9</p> <p><i>Documents approved for submission to MOP with modifications as described above:</i> AEWA/StC16.21</p> <p><i>Documents approved by the StC for further use and/or dissemination:</i> AEWA/StC16.8, AEWA/StC16.22, AEWA/StC16.23</p> <p><i>Documents to be approved at the StC’s ad-hoc meeting in July:</i> AEWA/StC16.10, AEWA/StC16.14, AEWA/StC16.15 AEWA/StC16.16, AEWA/StC16.17, AEWA/StC16.25, AEWA/StC16.26, AEWA/StC16DR6, AEWA/StC16DR5 AEWA/StC16DR7</p>
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Agenda item 8. Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising (IMCA) Unit

129. Mr Florian Keil, Communication Officer at the AEWA Secretariat, introduced document AEWA/StC 16.29, *Report on the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-Raising (IMCA) Unit*, by giving an overview of the team’s composition, various IMCA activities as well as by reporting on the time and task monitoring system (Toggl) that the IMCA unit has been using.

130. Following Mr Keil’s presentation, Ms Rimmelts addressed the cost efficiency of the joint unit and wondered how it worked out in favor of AEWA. Furthermore, she recalled that there had been

doubts in the past about continuing the webpages of the AEWA International Working Groups and noticed that this was not mentioned in the document.

131. Mr Keil explained that the webpages were being maintained in terms of IT by the IMCA Unit, but that there was currently a version upgrade issue, meaning that there was a need to upgrade the websites to the latest content management system, i.e. Drupal 8. He also noted that there was currently no content management of the webpages, since the Programme Officer responsible had left the organisation and there was no replacement yet. Regarding Ms Rimmelts query on the cost efficiency, Mr Keil pointed out the benefits of the shared Unit in terms of its cost efficiencies and confirmed that there was an advantage for CMS in terms of the current overall time calculation.

132. Mr Trouvilliez further explained the nature and history of the shared unit and how the cost efficiencies were achieved particularly at the time of the creation of the Unit, when tasks of the CMS P4 Information Officer were taken on by the new shared Unit. He explained that for AEWA the savings had been close to zero, but that the IMCA team was not costing more resources than before its creation, but that AEWA was receiving more specialisation and security through the bigger team.

133. Mr Storkersen said that he had the impression that this was a mutually beneficial agreement and that he was surprised to see a P4 position in the team's composition.

134. Mr Trouvilliez explained that a P4 was allocated temporarily in March 2020 by the CMS Secretariat in connection with the pandemic as some of the staff members were on sick leave for the day-to-day coordination. After one month, the two Executive Secretaries decided to continue this temporary arrangement till the end of the year which allowed Mr Keil to focus on priorities such as the World Migratory Bird Day campaign. He explained that this would also allow Mr Keil to concentrate on his skills and strengths and that the decision to re-shape the Unit was also made because Mr Keil has had too much on his plate, with leading the World Migratory Bird Day campaign and coordinating the whole team. The P4 is still coordinating the team but the two Executive Secretaries are exploring different ways to strengthen the communication unit in the framework of the institutional arrangements adopted by the AEWA StC in October 2016.

135. Ms Herzog mentioned that Switzerland was in favor of the joint unit, provided it was shared equally and proposed to make the imbalance clearer in the document. She added that she was glad to see that the IMCA Unit had done a really good job with the monitoring of the time allocation and that she thought the quality of the unit's outputs had improved. She also highlighted that there were likely many other soft factors, such as people being happier in their jobs which has led to a noticeable improvement since the creation of the Unit. Ms Herzog noted that the accumulated imbalance was quite large and that it should be described "less diplomatically" in future reports.

136. Mr Mackown commented on the significant imbalance accumulated and asked whether there might be more creative ways to address the imbalance, such as through direct payment of AEWA publications by CMS.

137. Mr Trouvilliez responded saying it should be noted that the imbalance was mainly due to some staffing issues by CMS, highlighting some vacancies at CMS that had not been filled. He explained that he was working closely with the CMS Executive Secretary to solve the imbalance and that steps had already been taken by CMS to recruit a G-4 staff to help with Drupal 8.

138. Mr Mackown noted that a conclusion on how to solve the deficit should be reached by the end of the year. He concluded that an updated IMCA report should be provided for the next meeting of the StC following AEWA MOP8 showing how the equilibrium between the two Secretariats contributing to the common unit was achieved.

Agenda item 9. Financial and Administrative Matters

139. Introducing document AEWA/StC 16.30, *Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative issues*, Mr Trouvilliez reported on the execution of the 2019-2021 budget, administrative and personnel matters as well as on the status of AEWA contributions in arrears.

a. Execution of the 2019-2021 budget

140. Mr Trouvilliez gave an overview on the income, expenditures, trust fund balance as well as on voluntary and in-kind contributions.

141. He highlighted that the AEWA Secretariat was considered by the UNEP Finance Unit to having a fairly healthy income situation and that there have been savings from the travel budget in 2020 due to the travel restrictions in connection with the global pandemic. This was also the case for the first quarter of 2021.

142. Mr Trouvilliez was, furthermore, pleased to inform all those present, that there was healthy trust fund balance and thanked those countries that had made voluntary and in-kind contributions.

b. Administrative and Personnel Matters

143. Mr Trouvilliez continued by giving an overview on the AEWA Secretariat's staffing situation and, in particular, the implications of the LWfG Coordinator leaving the Secretariat in March 2021.

144. He emphasised that the Secretariat had been in a critical situation, since one third of the staff time was highly dependent on voluntary contributions.

145. Regarding the LWfG situation, Mr Trouvilliez explained that the extension of the LWfG ISSAP and the modalities of its revision would be discussed at MOP8. In addition, the LWfG ISSAP Coordinator resigned in March 2021. The position had been fully funded by the Government of Norway for the last 14 years, that has now decided to pause their contribution until a decision has been made at the MOP since it is in disagreement with some of the options put forward. Depending on the outcome, Norway could decide to renew or permanently suspend their funding for the P3 position, as they indicated in their letter dated 27 April received by the Secretariat.

146. There has been an immediate impact on the AEWA Secretariat's implementation work due to this recent development. The recruitment for the vacant P3 position had to be paused despite a very good candidate identified, the UN rules prohibiting to recruit a staff without corresponding funds. The AEWA Secretariat's involvement in the new LWfG EU LIFE project as well as the coordination of several International Species Working Groups would also be paused until MOP8, as the staffing of the Secretariat made a reallocation of these tasks to another staff member impossible. Hopefully the situation would be cleared at MOP8.

147. Ms Remmelts raised a concern regarding the position of the LWfG ISSAP Coordinator. She said that Mr Trouvilliez mentioned that the coordination of International Species Working Groups would be paused. However, the Netherlands were paying for the coordination of the Black-tailed Godwit Working Group and there was a plan to have a meeting in September. Ms Remmelts asked whether this meant that all activities needed to be postponed or whether the coordinators could carry on with their jobs.

148. Mr Trouvilliez responded that the AEWa Secretariat would discuss the situation with each of the working group coordinators individually to see what may be possible in the near future with a view to continuing the work as much as possible. It would be decided within the coming weeks whether the Black-tailed Godwit meeting could take place.

c. Status of AEWa Contributions in Arrears

149. Mr Trouvilliez updated everyone on the unpaid mandatory contributions, noting that 21 Parties had more than three years of arrears and that 6 Parties have not paid at all since their accession. This prevented an improvement of the Trust Fund balance. The Secretariat was working with all Parties to reduce the arrears and some successes had already been achieved.

d. Budget Scenarios for 2022-2024 and AEWa Scale of Contributions

150. Referring to document AEWa/StC 16.31, *Draft Budget Proposal for 2021-2024*, Mr Trouvilliez introduced the four budget scenarios that could be presented to the upcoming MOP upon the approval by the StC.

151. The first option being with zero nominal growth, the second with zero real growth, the third would be to secure the African Initiative and, finally, the fourth scenario being to improve the overall implementation of AEWa.

152. Mr Trouvilliez furthermore explained that it was proposed to postpone the full application of the UN scale and to reassess the situation prior to MOP9, since all governments currently faced financial constraints due *pro-parte* to the COVID-19 crisis.

153. Ms Remmelts said that it would be crucial to outline the scenarios more precisely in the document, including highlighting what would be missing if the budget was not increased as well as what would the Parties benefit from if the budget was increased.

154. Mr Storkersen recalled the complicated but successful budget discussions at the last MOP, when he chaired the finance working group. He commended the good overview compiled by the Secretariat and thought it was important to present various scenarios to the MOP.

155. Furthermore, he took the opportunity to acknowledge that Norway had created a difficult situation for the AEWa Secretariat by temporarily withdrawing their funding for the LWfG P3 position. He assured the AEWa Secretariat that Norway was still willing to continue their funding for the position in addition to other voluntary contributions. He said that it has been quite a substantial amount over the years. The Coordinator position had been funded by Norway for the past 14 years and Norway had always been willing to listen to the Secretariat and its need to upscale the position and to allocate funds to work on additional tasks. However, Mr Storkersen thought that it was obvious that if there was a change to the mandate which contravened what Norway saw as a main and important task

to maintain the natural flyway for the species, it would not be logical to fund anything opposing that target. Norway, therefore, had to notify the Secretariat about the temporary withdrawal of their funding. It was not done light-heartedly, but Norway had to reposition themselves and see how it may be taken forward. Mr Storkersen added that if there was a negative outcome at the MOP, there was no mandate anymore for the Secretariat to work on the ISSAP. He urged Parties to look at the situation carefully and to consider the consequences of any changes.

156. Mr Mackown thanked Mr Storkersen for his intervention and went on to repeat Ms Remmelt's point about presenting the budget scenarios stronger. There also needed to be a clearer rationale of why some posts must be funded by the core budget. For example, the Compliance Officer. He said that there was no way to have someone dealing with compliance issues through voluntary contributions. There were, for example, significant issues around propriety. What if a country providing a voluntary contribution for that position had an IRP case running against them? How would they view their continued contribution and what would that mean for the outcome of the IRP? Therefore, the Compliance Officer position needed to be funded through core funding, also because the Compliance Officer was there for the benefit of all Parties, that would want to see everyone complying with and delivering on the objectives of the treaty. Mr Mackown emphasised that these details would be helpful for making a stronger case.

157. Furthermore, he noted that there was a significant leap between scenarios three and four and wondered whether there was an intermediate option. He added that more room for negotiations was needed between the scenarios.

158. Mr Trouvilliez said that the suggestions would be taken into account to improve the document. In addition, he mentioned the outcome of the discussion was not to adopt the full scenario 3 or 4 but rather to build the best budget scenario in order to fulfil the mandate given by the successive MOPs. In that context one or two elements from scenario 4 could be added to scenario 3, for example. He went on to explain that there were often one or two countries preventing the adoption of scenarios three or four. He was sceptical that by using the UN scale Parties would take the less appealing offer.

159. Following a brief discussion, the general feeling was to stay with the UN scale as it would be difficult for some countries to move away from it. The StC recommended that in developing the budget scenario to pause the come-back to the full UN scale for MOP8 and to delay going back to the full UN scale until MOP9.

160. Mr Mackown said that since document AEW/STC/16/DR.12 *Draft Resolution on Financial and Administrative Matters*, was quite straightforward there was no need for an introduction and opened the floor for comments.

161. Mr Mackown thought that the text of operative paragraph 8 of the document needed to be strengthened to make clear that insufficient funding would limit the capacity of the Secretariat. The Parties may not be cognisant of the fact that their decision had a direct impact on what could be delivered.

162. Mr Trouvilliez agreed and confirmed the Secretariat would provide additional text for the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.

163. Mr Dereliev introduced document AEW/STC/16/DR.3 *Draft Resolution on the State of the Implementation of AEW and its Strategic Plan 2019-2027*.

164. Following a brief discussion on whether operative paragraphs 9 and 10 may be better suited in another document, Mr Dereliev said that the Secretariat had not been able to identify a better place. Since this resolution was about the implementation of the Agreement and the Strategic Plan the Secretariat thought they were placed well in this resolution. He asked the Parties to let the Secretariat know, if they felt more comfortable placing them somewhere else.

165. Mr Mackown proposed to postpone the decision to the StC’s ad-hoc meeting in July, but requested the Secretariat to follow up on following points:

<i>Decisions</i>	<p><i>MOP8 to be provided with a clear overview on what would be covered and what would be missing under each budget scenario.</i></p> <p><i>Sound argumentation to be provided for each new post to be integrated in the budget.</i></p> <p><i>Options to be integrated for adopting a scenario between the scenarios 3 and 4 described in doc 16.31 rev. 1.</i></p> <p><i>Stronger text to be provided under the preambular paragraph no 8 of StC16.DR12 rev. 1 to convince that insufficient funding will limit the Secretariat’s possibilities to support implementation of the Agreement.</i></p>
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Agenda item 10. Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes

166. Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/StC16 DR2, *Draft Resolution on the Adoption of the Amendments to the AEWA Annexes.*

167. Mr Mackown thought that this was a very straightforward resolution and, since there were no further comments, concluded that it was approved for submission to the MOP.

168. Following Mr Dereliev’s introduction to document AEWA/StC 16 DR1, *Draft Resolution on the Procedure for Submission of Proposals for Amendments to the Agreement*, there were some concerns that the text of any proposed amendment and the reasons for it, other than proposed amendments originating from the work of the Technical Committee, shall be communicated by the submitting Contracting Party to the Technical Committee, through the Agreement Secretariat, not later than 300 days before the opening of the session of the Meeting of the Parties.

169. Mr Dereliev explained that according to the legal text Parties shall submit proposals for amendments not later than 150 days before the start of the MOP and that the Secretariat should forward those proposals to all Parties for their review and comments with a deadline of 60 days before the MOP. The 300 days did not contravene the agreement text and was just a preliminary step in the procedure. The TC would review the submission and provide its advice on the text of the proposed amendment to the submitting CP for its consideration no later than 180 days before the opening of the MOP to assist CPs in submitting comprehensive and technically sound proposals for amendments. Whether it was convenient was a different issue for the Parties to consider.

170. Mr Mackown proposed to take this resolution to the ad-hoc meeting in July and asked the StC members to review it more thoroughly with clearer views.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Document AEWA/StC16DR2 to be reviewed more thoroughly by the StC members in preparation for the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.</i>
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Agenda item 11. Update on other ongoing activities

171. Mr Dereliev gave all those present an update on some ongoing work, particularly TC tasks in progress, noting that most tasks in the workplan had been fully completed.

172. Mr Mackown said that it showed the value added by the AEWA Secretariat and why it was crucial to secure more and adequate funding.

173. Mr Storkersen took the floor, echoed what Mr Mackown said and appreciated some of the fantastic initiatives. However, there was the issue of having produced lots of resolutions on livelihoods. Mr Storkersen wondered whether this was really advancing the agenda. He hoped to see more prioritisation on where an important impact could be made rather than focusing on voluminous resolutions and wording. Concrete activities and actions were needed. He added that he would keep pushing for funding from Norway.

174. Ms Nicola Crockford, representative of BirdLife International, agreed to the points that Mr Storkersen raised, while supporting the activities that Mr Dereliev had outlined.

175. As there were no further comments, Mr Mackown thanked Mr Dereliev and the AEWA Secretariat for the update and excellent work.

Agenda item 12. Institutional Arrangements

176. The meeting was invited to review document AEWA/StC16 DR10, *Draft Resolution on the Standing Committee Institutional Arrangements*. As there were no comments, the document was approved for submission to the MOP.

177. Referring to document AEWA/StC16 DR11, *Draft Resolution on the Technical Committee Institutional Arrangements*, Mr Dereliev brought the meeting's attention to Annex II of the document, which was the TC's workplan for the next triennium. He explained that the draft was currently being worked on and that it would be ready for the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.

178. Mr Dereliev further explained that the nomination procedure for the vacant TC positions was still in progress and urged attending parties to submit nominations. Once these were received, the advisory group will be convened, and a decision on the recommendation to MOP8 will be taken.

179. Mr Mackown also encouraged the StC Regional Representatives to submit nominations. As there were no further comments, the document was approved for submission to the MOP.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Documents AEWA/StC16DR10 and AEWA/StC16DR11 were approved for submission to the MOP.</i>
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Agenda item 13. Implications from Moving from a 3-yearly to a 4-yearly Meeting of the Parties

180. Mr Trouvilliez explained that, unfortunately, the AEWA Secretariat lacked time and resources in order to deliver on this agenda item. He proposed to finalise the analysis for the ad-hoc meeting in July.

181. Mr Mackown agreed and said he looked forward to seeing the analysis at the meeting in July. There were no further comments.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Analysis of moving from a 3-yearly to a 4-yearly Meeting of the Parties to be provided by the Secretariat at the StC's ad-hoc meeting in July.</i>
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Agenda item 14. Selection of AEWA Award Winners

-CANCELLED as decided by the StC members (please see paragraph 4 above)-

Agenda item 15. Date and Venue of the 17th Meeting of the Standing Committee

182. Mr Mackown said that the next meeting of the StC would take place immediately after MOP8, should it go ahead in October 2021.

183. Mr Trouvilliez added that it would be a short meeting its main purpose being the election of the new StC Chair and Vice-Chair.

184. It was agreed that the ad-hoc meeting in July would be a continuation of StC16.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Next StC meeting to take place immediately after MOP8. The StC's ad-hoc meeting in July will be a continuation of StC16.</i>
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Agenda item 16. Any Other Business

185. Although two items had been added under this agenda item (see paragraph 5), Mr Mackown suggested, in the interest of time, to postpone the discussions to the ad-hoc meeting in July. Everyone agreed to this suggestion.

Agenda item 17. Closure of the Meeting

186. Mr Mackown opened the floor to anyone who wished to make final comments.

187. Ms Rummelts thanked the AEWA Secretariat for all its hard work despite being so short-staffed.

188. Mr Trouvilliez thanked the StC members for all their advice and comments on the documents. He reiterated the high number of participants with more than 40 attending most of the time. Mr Trouvilliez thought it was nice to see some of the participants at least virtually and confirmed that the AEWA Secretariat would prepare the ad-hoc meeting of the StC for early July.

189. Mr Mackown reiterated Ms Remmelts' point on the hard work of the AEWA Secretariat and greatly appreciated it pulling together all the documents. He valued the Secretariat's efforts and pointed out that a lot of work had been done throughout the meeting. Mr Mackown thanked all participants for their input and constructive comments and hoped that the MOP would go ahead as planned.

190. With that the Chair declared the meeting closed.