

REPORT OF THE 9th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE¹
18 – 19 September 2013, Trondheim, Norway

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¹ Report finalised after a process of consultation with the Standing Committee and other participants of StC9.

StC9 Decisions and Required Actions

AGENDA ITEM	DECISION	ACTION
Agenda item 2. Revision and Adoption of the Rules of Procedure	The Meeting adopted the proposal for amendments as specified in StC 9.4 Rules of Procedure for the AEWA Standing Committee.	The Secretariat will post the revised RoP on the AEWA website and continue to follow the practice decided on at StC6, i.e. not to table the RoP at every StC Meeting, but to provide them as an information document, only adding them to the Agenda if there is a specific request for amendment.
Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme	The Chair declared the agenda and provisional work programme adopted.	
Agenda item 5. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 8th Meeting of the Standing Committee	As there were no comments on the draft report of the 8 th Meeting of the Standing Committee, the Chair declared the report adopted.	
Agenda item 6.b Report by the Technical Committee		The TC would prepare an indicative work plan for the next triennium for submission to MOP6.
Agenda item 7. Preparations for the 6th Ordinary Session of the Meeting of the Parties and Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of AEWA (20th Anniversary of AEWA – celebration in conjunction with MOP6)		The Secretariat should start fundraising and should provide more details on each item, indicating the costs involved as well as seeking more input from all stakeholders.
Agenda item 8. The Central Asian Flyway and Possible Related Amendments to the Annexes of the Agreement		<p>1 The current draft of the Analysis report will be revised according to the suggestions made and submitted to the CMS Secretariat by 27 September 2013 (Consultant).</p> <p>2. The Secretariat will then prepare a detailed cover letter to all the AEWA Contracting Parties, describing the background of the initiative and outlining the options for steps (incl. time-schedule) to be taken to take the process forward, together with the revised analysis and give them a deadline for comments allowing sufficient time for national consultation.</p>

StC9 Decisions and Required Actions

AGENDA ITEM	DECISION	ACTION
		3. The CAF range states would be informed of the outcome of the meeting and the actions taken (CMS Secretariat).
Agenda item 9. Contribution of the Standing Committee to the Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017		The StC regional representatives will contact the Contracting Parties in their regions with regard to reporting on the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan.
Agenda item 10. African Initiative for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in Africa	The Meeting approved the ToR for the Programme Assistant, Coordinator of the African Initiative, technical Support Unit and Sub-Regional Coordinator. It was decided that the issue of installing an alternate Sub-Regional Coordinator should be dealt with on regional basis.	
Agenda item 11. National Reports and Online Reporting Process	The Standing Committee approved the revised format for national reporting to MOP6.	
Agenda item 12. Implementation Review Process (IRP)		The Secretariat will provide the Standing Committee with information on potential IRP cases and support the Standing Committee as appropriate.
Agenda item 13. Revision of the Modus Operandi for the AEWA Small Grant Fund	The Standing Committee approved the revised version of the Modus Operandi for the AEWA Small Grant Fund.	The Secretariat will add the suggested footnote.
Agenda item 15. New Arabic Translation of the Agreement Text		
Agenda item 16. International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs) and International Single Species Management Plan (ISSMP)	The Standing Committee approved the ISSAP for the Conservation of the Shoebill on an interim basis, pending final approval at MOP6.	The Secretariat would disseminate information on the international implementation of the BtG ISSAP.

StC9 Decisions and Required Actions

AGENDA ITEM	DECISION	ACTION
Agenda item 17. AEWA Participation in and Collaboration with other Relevant Bodies and Processes	The Standing Committee welcomed the <i>Flyway Linking Organisations and Wetlands (FLOW)</i> initiative, led by Wetlands International.	
Agenda item 18. Financial and Administrative Matters	The Meeting decided that the Secretariat is authorized to use assessed contributions from Parties having joined the Agreement after AEWA MOP5 to cover the costs of Secretariat's staff training in excess of the allotment of BL 3201 on the 2013-2015 approved budget.	
Agenda item 18.b Migratory Species Champion Programme	The Standing Committee fully endorsed AEWA's involvement in the <i>Migratory Species Champion Programme</i> .	
Agenda item 18.c Administrative and Personnel Matters	The decisions of the Standing Committee are outlined in Annex II to this report.	

Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. In her capacity as Head of Section, Norwegian Environment Agency, Ms Gunn Paulsen opened the meeting and warmly welcomed the delegates and representatives of the UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/CMS Secretariats to the new premises of the Norwegian Environment Agency, a subsidiary body of the Norwegian Ministry of Environment in Oslo. Ms Paulsen stressed the importance of wetlands and clean water and working in close cooperation with NGOs. She mentioned Norway's long-term support of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, which reflects the urgent need for international cooperation. Finally, Ms Paulsen thanked the Secretariat for the excellent and professional assistance and preparation of all activities and meetings.

2. In his capacity as Chair of the Standing Committee and representative of the host country, Mr Øystein Størkersen also welcomed the delegates to Trondheim. He had worked very closely with the Secretariat, which was highly dedicated and had been doing an excellent job. Mr Størkersen stressed that one of the most important initiatives that the Secretariat had been very much involved in since MOP5 had been the African Initiative, strongly supported by the French Government and the Parties involved. He also stressed the importance of the Implementation Review Process (IRP), which was an important tool in supporting countries in dealing with issues that have adverse effects or potential adverse effects on either migratory waterbirds or on their habitats as a result of human activities.

3. The Executive Secretary of the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, Mr Bradnee Chambers referred to the close and growing collaboration between the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats. The CMS family consists of a broad group of agreements, in which AEWA has played a prominent role over the years. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has taken the lead in a number of innovative initiatives, such as the Online Reporting System (ORS), common e-community and IRP. He noted the Future Shape of CMS process initiated by the CMS COP and, in that context that ongoing synergies and links within the CMS Family should be strengthened institutionally. Another common project was the development of a strategic plan targeting all migratory species. He went on to thank the hosts for providing the excellent venue and looked forward to working with all those present.

4. The AEWA Acting Executive Secretary, Mr Marco Barbieri welcomed the participants on behalf of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, pleased that so many had been able to attend. He expressed his gratitude to Norway for the provision of the impressive premises and particularly to Mr Størkersen for the excellent collaboration regarding the preparations for the meeting. He was happy to see the entire Standing Committee present as well as Party representatives, which reflected the interest of the Parties in the work of the Secretariat. He noted that the Secretariat had been in a dynamic phase over the last few years and welcomed the guidance and advice of the Meeting on the issues at hand. He explained that he had been requested to exercise executive functions at the Secretariat for the last two years and that this would be his last important act in that capacity. He looked forward to a productive meeting.

Agenda item 2. Revision and Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

5. Mr Barbieri introduced a revised version of the Rules of Procedure (*Doc. StC 9.4*) (previously adopted by StC6) prepared by the Secretariat, including some changes to integrate the decisions by the MOP. The document had been tabled at StC8, which decided to refer it to StC9 for adoption. The question of additionally amending the Rules of Procedure (RoP) regarding the regional rotation in the appointment of officers was discussed and it was decided that there was no need to formalise this, as in practice, it happens automatically after each term of office.

Decision: The Meeting adopted the proposal for amendments as specified in StC 9.4 Rules of Procedure for the AEWA Standing Committee.

Action: The Secretariat will post the revised RoP on the AEWA website and continue to follow the practice decided on at StC6, i.e. not to table the RoP at every StC

Meeting, but to provide them as an information document, only adding them to the Agenda if there is a specific request for amendment.

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

6. Referring to the Provisional Agenda (*Doc. StC 9.1 Rev.1*) and Provisional Schedule (*Doc. StC 9.2*), the Chair informed the Meeting that due to the nature of the issues to be discussed under Agenda item 18c. *Administrative and Personnel Matters*, it had been decided that this agenda item would be dealt with in the form of a closed session, including the StC Members and Party observers only. The outcome of the closed session would then be reported to the plenary.

7. Under Agenda item 20. *Any Other Business*, Germany proposed the inclusion of the issue of bird netting in Egypt, which was of great concern to Germany. The AEWAs Technical Officer, Mr Sergey Dereliev informed the meeting that this issue was already expected to be dealt with under Agenda item 12. *Implementation Review Process*.

8. Representing Algeria, Dr Ammar Boumezbeur explained that it would be easier for him to make his contributions to the Meeting in French and Mr Barbieri agreed to translate. He thanked the French-speaking delegates for enabling the Meeting to be carried out in English.

Decision: The Chair declared the agenda and provisional work programme adopted.

Agenda item 4. Welcome and Admission of Observers

9. The Chair stressed how happy he was to see so many observers at the meeting and he welcomed their contributions to the discussions. The final list of participants (*StC Inf 9.3*) is attached to this report as Annex I.

Agenda item 5. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 8th Meeting of the Standing Committee

10. Mr Barbieri introduced document *StC 9.7 Draft Report of the 8th Meeting of the Standing Committee*.

Decision: As there were no comments on the draft report of the 8th Meeting of the Standing Committee, the Chair declared the report adopted.

Agenda item 6. Reports

6.a Reports by the Standing Committee Regional Members and Party Observers

11. The Chair noted that written reports had been submitted by all the Regional Representatives for their respective regions. These were available as information documents on the AEWAs website²:

12. The Chair thanked the Regional Representatives for their work involved in liaising with the countries in their regions and compiling the reports for the Standing Committee. There were no further reports from Party Observers.

² http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc9docs/stc9_docs.htm

6.b Report by the Technical Committee

13. Mr David Stroud, Chair of the AEWA Technical Committee (TC) reported on the outcome of the 11th Meeting of the Technical Committee, kindly hosted by The Forestry Commission of Ghana - Wildlife Division, from 27 to 30 August 2012 in Accra, Ghana. The meeting had been attended and contributed to by a number of observers from Contracting Parties and international organisations. The main focus of the meeting had been to develop and approve a work programme for the Technical Committee for the current triennium, the outputs of which would be presented to the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP6) in 2015.

14. For this purpose, the Technical Committee had been divided up into 10 Working Groups, e.g. on international reviews, whereby the Conservation Status Review and finalisation of the Site Network Review were given priority. Another priority activity is the development of International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs), as well as the systematic development of waterbird monitoring and the issues of climate change and renewable energy and migratory waterbirds. The Technical Committee is also trying to look forward and to assess emerging issues, a number of which are being considered.

15. Israel had offered to host the final Technical Committee Meeting before MOP6, which is planned for late October 2014.

16. Mr Stroud went on to suggest a change in the approach to presenting the outcomes of the Technical Committee to the MOP, i.e. that at the last TC meeting before the MOP, the TC puts together an indicative work plan including priorities, funding requirements and draft resolutions so that the Parties see the work plan as a whole package, making it more transparent in terms of prioritisation, particularly regarding items that needed outsourcing. In this way, the Parties could look forward as well as back on the work of the TC. This process would benefit both the Parties and the TC. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) had already successfully introduced this approach.

17. This approach was welcomed by the Chair, who agreed that presenting an indicative Work Plan to the Parties would give them a more complete picture and would make the work of the Technical Committee more transparent.

Decision/Action: The TC would prepare an indicative work plan for the next triennium for submission to MOP6.

6.c Report by the Depositary

18. Representing the Depositary, Ms Anja Pel-Roest, referred to document StC 9.6 *Report of the Depositary*, reporting that 71 countries and the European Union were Party to the Agreement and that Greece was a signatory to the Agreement, but has not yet ratified it. She went on to report that in 2012 Morocco, Zimbabwe and Gabon and in 2013 Swaziland, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Iceland had joined the Agreement.

19. MOP5 had adopted Amendments to Annexes 2 and 3 of the Agreement, which had entered into force on the 90th day after adoption, except for Parties, which had entered a reservation within the period of 90 days; these were listed in Annex I to *Doc. 9.6*.

6.d Report by the Secretariat

20. Mr Barbieri introduced document StC 9.7 *Report of the Secretariat*, which covered the period from June 2012 to July 2013.

21. Germany thanked the Secretariat for the report, enquiring about the status of accession of Poland to the Agreement and also the status of the planned energy working group.

22. Mr Barbieri reported that he had been in touch with Poland and that the accession procedure had been put on hold until 2014, due to budgetary constraints.

23. Regarding the energy working group, Mr Dereliev explained that discussions with partners were currently taking place to determine how this could be undertaken. A suitable opportunity would be in the framework of the joint CMS/AEWA/BirdLife/International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) project *Renewable Energy Technologies Deployment and Migratory Species*, which foresaw the development of a review report on conflicts between renewable energy technologies deployment and migratory species and guidelines to mitigate those conflicts.

24. This review was being funded by CMS, AEWA, IRENA and BirdLife International; however there was still a shortfall of 60,000 USD. Mr Dereliev called on the countries present to consider providing a contribution towards this important joint project. Once this review had been submitted to the CMS Parties at COP11, the relevant resolution could include a mandate for the establishment of the group. He went on to stress the rapid electrification of the African continent and that the new network of powerlines may have a huge impact in the near future, thus action should be taken as soon as possible. He stressed the importance of this group and hoped that it could be formed soon after the CMS COP in 2014.

25. The Chair welcomed this initiative as a good opportunity to strengthen compliance among the Parties and an important step for the CMS family.

6.e Reports by other Observers

26. Representing the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE), Mr Alexander Griffin reported that Mr Angus Middleton would be stepping down as Chief Executive Officer of FACE and that he would continue as focal point for AEWA issues.

27. He went on to report about the recent re-launch of the *Waterbird Harvest Specialist Group (WHSG)*³, chaired by Jesper Madsen from the Aarhus University, Denmark, which was a very positive development. The group can trace its origins back to the 'Hunting Research Group' founded in 1969 and had been lying dormant for a few years. The main purpose of the group was to support science-based decision-making concerning the harvest of waterbird populations to ensure that their use is ecologically, socially and economically sustainable.

28. This includes the identification of different types of harvest and their impacts on populations as well as the role of harvesting in different countries and the ethical issues involved. The aim is to bring experts together who are already working on waterbird harvest. He stressed the importance of the adaptation of management to incorporate monitoring.

The WHSG would be open to serve as a global forum for sharing knowledge and practical experience on waterbird harvesting. The practical work would be organised according to the major flyway instruments, with an initial focus on the AEWA flyway. Membership to the group is open to both individuals and organisations.

29. Mr Griffin also reported that the FACE annual report for 2013⁴, which outlines the background and key activities of the main working themes, including the work with CMS and AEWA, is now available and can be downloaded or ordered from the FACE Secretariat.

³ <http://www.wetlands.org/Aboutus/Networkspartnersanddonors/Networkofspecialists/WaterbirdHarvestSpecialistGroup/tabid/1252/Default.aspx>

⁴ http://www.face.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/face_annual_report_2013_en.pdf

Agenda item 7. Preparations for the 6th Ordinary Session of the Meeting of the Parties and Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of AEWA

30. The analysis of the questionnaires filled out by MOP5 participants, which aimed at assessing the degree of satisfaction of the attendance on various aspects of the organization of the Session was made available in *Doc. StC. 9.9*.

31. Mr Barbieri reported that MOP5 had not been able to make a decision on the venue of MOP6 and through Resolution 5.27, had invited interested Parties to voice their interest in hosting, requesting the Standing Committee to take the decision. In accordance with this, shortly after MOP5, the Secretariat had sent a list of the requirements and responsibilities related to hosting a Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the AEWA Contracting Parties. A formal offer by the Government of Iceland was sent to the Secretariat on 12 November 2012. The Secretariat undertook a mission to Iceland in August 2013 to discuss the preparations and to visit the proposed venue.

32. Representing Iceland, Mr Sigurdur Thrainsson informed the Meeting that the current Government, which had taken office after the elections in spring 2013, had recently decided to withdraw the proposal due to the constraints facing the economy. Mr Thrainsson deeply regretted this decision, particularly because the working group, which had been set up specifically for that purpose had come far with regard to preparations and the details of the Host Government Agreement had already been discussed with the Secretariat. An official letter from the Government of Iceland would follow this announcement.

33. The Chair thanked Mr Thrainsson for attending the Meeting and for informing those present in person. He also thanked him for all the efforts made by Iceland with regard to preparations and logistics. Despite the obvious disappointment on all sides, the Standing Committee respected the decision of the Government of Iceland. One alternative may be to hold MOP6 in Bonn or to request further offers by the end of the year. The timing was important if the planned dates, i.e. around 16 June 2015, which is the 20th Anniversary of AEWA, were to be kept to.

34. Mr Barbieri reiterated the gratitude to the Government of Iceland, despite the disappointing decision. The Secretariat had been very impressed by the willingness and genuine interest of the Ministry of Environment to host the meeting under the best conditions.

Responding to suggestions of possibly finding other sources of funding to support Iceland, Mr Thrainsson explained that the budgetary decision had been withdrawn and that this decision was final.

35. On behalf of BirdLife international, Ms Nicola Crockford reported that the invitation by Iceland had been particularly welcomed by BirdLife because of the new Memorandum of Cooperation between AEWA and the working group on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) under the Arctic Council of Ministers, as the arctic region supplied a large part of the waterbirds conserved all the way down the African-Eurasian flyway. She enquired if there could still be a way of initiating a joint Session of the MOP amongst the Nordic countries in the arctic region.

36. The Chair explained that no preparations for an alternative had been made and such an initiative would take some time to look into.

20th Anniversary of AEWA – Celebration in Conjunction with MOP6

37. Mr Florian Keil, AEWA Information Officer introduced some preliminary ideas concerning the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of AEWA in conjunction with MOP6 (*Doc. StC 9.8*). He hoped that this could still be linked to MOP6, despite the uncertainty surrounding the dates. A list of preliminary ideas had been compiled by the Secretariat in Document StC 9.8. He explained that this central event could be complemented by national celebrations. This could be an opportunity to feature some AEWA success stories and highlight countries' conservation activities, including keynote speakers, a donor's dinner and/or a book and a film.

38. The Chair welcomed these ideas and gave the green light for the Secretariat to start fundraising this year. Support would be needed from countries and other potential donors. He welcomed any further ideas.

39. Speaking on behalf of her region, Ms Courouble underlined the importance of having an estimate of the cost of each item, due to the general restrictive financial situation.

40. Mr Stroud suggested reflecting on the reality of the situation, i.e. that the analysis of the national reports submitted to MOP6 had shown that more waterbird populations were declining rather than increasing, thus despite all the efforts, the situation is worsening. He suggested selecting 20 of the most threatened waterbirds and habitats and to base a motto on this, i.e. '20 for 20'. Related images could then be used throughout all the items planned, linking them. In this way awareness-raising could be targeted at the chosen species.

41. Other suggestions included focusing on successes and the good work done as well as putting over a clear message that the problems are real but that AEWA has tried and tested mechanisms to deal with them. The objective and the audience should be clearly defined.

<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat should start fundraising and should provide more details on each item, indicating the costs involved as well as seeking more input from all stakeholders.</i>
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Agenda item 8. The Central Asian Flyway and Possible Related Amendments to the Annexes of the Agreement

42. The Chair introduced the issue, reporting that the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Action Plan had been in the pipeline for many years in the framework of CMS, and that a number of meetings on the issue had already taken place. There was a need for close liaison with the CAF range states, including the Russian Federation and China. The Standing Committee should give guidance as to how to take the process forward in preparation for MOP6.

43. Mr Barbieri gave a short introduction into the latest developments regarding the CAF Action Plan. Progress made had been reported to the 5th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat. A subsequent meeting of the CAF range states and other stakeholders had been convened by CMS in Abu Dhabi on 12-13 December 2012, aimed at negotiating the institutional and legal framework for the CAF action plan. The main outcome of this meeting (outlined in a Final Declaration³) was the decision that the '*preferred way forward to ensure the effective implementation of the CAF Waterbird Action Plan is through its incorporation into AEWA and the expansion of the geographical area of the Agreement to encompass the entire CAF region*'.

44. The meeting had also requested the AEWA Contracting Parties to consider the extension of AEWA at MOP6 so as to encompass the CAF region and to incorporate the CAF Action Plan. The AEWA Standing Committee was also requested, in consultation with the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats, to consider how to take this matter forward, with a view to presenting a proposal to MOP6 for decision. The first step undertaken, under the leadership of CMS, had been to develop an analysis of the implications of this extension. Since the document was still a draft in progress, it had not been made publically available on the webpage of the Meeting but only distributed to the Standing Committee Members and the other Party Representatives participating in the Meeting.

45. Mr David Pritchard, who had been commissioned to analyse the implications for AEWA of an extension of the scope of the Agreement to incorporate the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats, presented the preliminary results of the analysis. He reported that the outcomes of the analysis had shown that there were neither biological or scientific reasons nor any legal or financial implications speaking against incorporation of the CAF Action Plan into AEWA. The general conclusion of the analysis was that incorporation into AEWA was a feasible option.

46. He went on to give a summary of the main implications, making reference to the relevant sections of the draft report:

- Geographically, the incorporation of CAF implies the extension of AEWA to 13 extra countries.
- The best option for the incorporation would be to design a single integrated system. This could be achieved by amending the annexes, without having to amend the Articles of the Agreement;
- Definition of the AEWA region in Annex 1 of the Agreement would need amendment to include the new Range States, having as a reference the existing definition of the CAF region;
- 40 extra species would need to be added to Annex 2 of the Agreement;
- The AEWA and CAF Action Plans were very similar in structure and content. The draft report included suggestions as to how to incorporate the differing parts into an integrated action plan to be included in a revised Annex 3 to the Agreement;
- The operation of some implementation processes under the two action plans would need to be integrated in the combined area;
- AEWA Standing Committee - no need of change in the composition but the regional representation should be formalised to include one member for Europe and one for Central Asia;
- AEWA Technical Committee - the regions defined to determine the regional representation in the Committee would need some adjustments to take into account the new range states, which could be done through an amendment of the Technical Committee *modus operandi* by a MOP decision;
- Extending the Agreement area will put increased demand on the Secretariat;
- Extra staff requirements were estimated to be equivalent of one full-time professional and one general service support post;
- Need to identify sources of funding, for which the report provided some suggestions;
- The merging of the Action Plans would provide an opportunity for cost efficiencies for the entire CMS Family.

Mr. Pritchard concluded his presentation by highlighting four possible next steps:

- Drafting process to consolidate the action plans;
- Drafting the elements of a MOP decision;
- A consultation process with governments and stakeholders;
- Further work to assess the cost implications and identify sources of financial support.

47. Ms Courouble, speaking on behalf of her region, Europe and Central Asia, remarked that it is not for the StC to decide on this important issue. She recommended circulating the recommendations for comments through the regional representatives of the StC to the Contracting Parties. She remarked that she had been surprised that the Parties had not been consulted at an earlier stage in the process and involved in the discussion.

48. On behalf of France, she reported that the situation of the CAF range states and the urgency of an implementation of the Action Plan were well known, but France was not convinced that integration now would be the best solution, as many of the CAF range states do not have the capacity to implement the Action Plan; integration would not change that. AEWA was a very effective framework thanks to its coherence and long-established cooperation along the African-Eurasian flyway. Extending the agreement would risk diluting its focus and reducing effectiveness.

49. Two-thirds of the AEWA Strategic Plan were still not implemented. Particularly the fact that the Russian Federation and the Gulf States were not party to AEWA would hamper the process. Also with regard to the European Union, Poland and Austria had also not yet acceded to the Agreement. These

issues should be concentrated on first, before considering an extension of the region. In addition the Plan of Action for Africa had been adopted at the last Session of the MOP, as a priority for AEWA.

50. The financial implications related to the main activities in the CAF Action Plan posed further problems as the donor countries were already reducing their voluntary contributions due to restrictions. She went on to stress that the financial implications of the CAF Action Plan should be more detailed and the pros and cons clearly stated. Finally she referred to the planned increased synergies and that it could be more effective to implement this Action Plan in the framework of CMS, while making use of common services.

51. Germany thanked Mr Pritchard for the study, which was very helpful. Further clarification was sought on the questions of the title of AEWA and if this would remain unchanged and whether the combination of the Action Plans would lead to fewer obligations for the AEWA Parties. When the founding of AEWA had been discussed 20 years ago, the eastern limit of the Agreement had been defined on the basis of a clear picture of the systems of migration based upon extensive scientific knowledge; the extension eastward would imply that these criteria were no longer clear.

52. Germany concurred with France that the European Union considers the ongoing Future Shape process, as the best way to address the issue and cluster issues effectively to be able to make a real difference to these species. Germany is not against this proposal but suggests taking a broader perspective and looking at the issue from the point of view of the new CMS Strategic Plan.

53. The Chair noted that the CAF range states had recommended merging the CAF with AEWA and that this request had to be dealt with; the analysis had been the first step. It would be useful to circulate the document to all the current AEWA Parties for comments. The Secretariat could communicate a summary of the feedback to the Standing Committee at a later date. Regarding the Russian Federation, the Secretariat had been in close liaison with the Russian Government and good progress had been made in the preparation for accession.

54. Mr Chambers added that the analysis was an excellent way of exploring the implications for AEWA but it should be looked at how this would fit into the bigger picture of the CMS family – Parties may want to consider broadening the analysis.

55. Mr Dereliev added that the analysis of accommodating the CAF under the CMS framework had already been done in the framework of the meeting in Abu Dhabi in December 2012 and that the decision of that Meeting had been made on that basis. The history of the process should not be forgotten and the growing frustration at the stagnation of the process. The range states were very eager to start the urgent work outlined in the Action Plan.

56. In his capacity as chair of the CMS Flyways Working Group, Mr Mundkur reminded that CMS Resolution 10.10 had recommended considering synergies between AEWA and CAF, as well as the recently approved Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and other Migratory Waterbirds. He reported on the high levels of enthusiasm and momentum at the Abu Dhabi Meeting in December 2012. There had been changes in the past seven years and in some of the CAF range states capacities had increased, enabling implementation activities related to the Action Plan to commence. He stressed that the 2012 Meeting had been a strong meeting with a strong message. He saw this as an opportunity for AEWA to gain economically, due to the rapid developments in the countries, especially in the field of environment. He saw no problem in being able to mobilise funds. Wetlands International had been closely involved in the process. He was impressed by the analysis report, which also gave a clear message. It would seem that things could now be taken forward quickly and concurred with France that looking at financial aspects in more detail could banish any concerns.

57. Mr Stroud, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Abu Dhabi Meeting added that there were two key questions involved:

- Which institutional arrangements do the CAF range states wish?
- And does AEWA wish to expand to include the CAF?

The range states decided in a complete consensus that they wish to be part of AEWA. The request of the Abu Dhabi Meeting was for the AEWA Standing Committee to develop a proposal for tabling at MOP6 with the request for the AEWA Contracting Parties to consider the proposal. There had been a feeling of progress and energy at the Abu Dhabi Meeting towards resolving this issue; the Standing Committee should be facilitating this to take it to the MOP.

58. In answer to the question of the impact of the extension to the CAF on the accession of the Russian Federation to AEWA, Mr Dereliev thanked France, also present at the current Meeting, as well as Switzerland for participating and supporting the efforts of the Secretariat in recruiting the Russian Federation to join AEWA. The CAF issue was seen as an additional incentive for the Russian Federation to join AEWA. It would be of advantage for the country to deal with as many flyway systems as possible under one Agreement, rather than to deal with the issue separately.

59. Mr Boumezbeur wondered whether it was in the spirit and philosophy of AEWA to go beyond its current limits in terms of geographical coverage and species, and thought that this required some reflection. Should the outcome be positive, there was merit in deepening the consultation and he proposed submitting its outcomes as an information document to be considered by the next MOP.

60. The Chair stressed the need to make a decision on the way forward. The Secretariat should liaise with the consultant to finalise the revision and the additional items to be looked into – this should be done by the end of the week following the Meeting. The revised document could be circulated to all the AEWA Parties including the Standing Committee for comments, together with a cover letter explaining the background of the initiative and the options for steps and time schedule necessary to take the process further. The request of the CAF range states should be honoured and a proposal compiled for presentation to MOP6, which is the governing body to make a final decision on this issue.

61. Mr Dereliev stressed that the best way forward to enable MOP6 to make a decision, would be to prepare a fully-fledged proposal for presentation to the MOP, incorporating the outcome of the consultation with the Parties. He explained that any Party can submit such a proposal to the MOP for approval.

62. Mr Akanswasah (Vice-Chair/Uganda) added that this may be a waste of efforts if the proposal is rejected – the work could be done after an initial decision has been taken and then presented to MOP7.

63. The Chair noted that it would be at the discretion of the proponent as to how to take this forward and how far a fully-fledged proposal should be prepared. The Secretariat would possibly be asked to assist with the preparation of this.

64. Ms Courouble supported Mr Akanswasah's suggestion that countries should agree first, particularly as they had not been involved in the Abu Dhabi Meeting. Both sides should be involved and transparency created with regard to the costs and benefits for AEWA and CMS and the political and conservation-related pros and cons.

65. On behalf of the Secretariat, Mr Barbieri concluded that the development of the analysis should continue by including the additions requested at this Meeting. The revised document should then be circulated to the Parties for a wider consultation. The possibility of including this further consultation within the existing consultancy contract had to be explored. The Secretariat needed a clear signal from the Meeting to support this procedure and the extent to which it could be proactive in supporting the development of a fully-fledged proposal, which can formally be submitted by any Party.

66. The Chair concurred that the report should be circulated to Parties as soon as possible and the comments incorporated. A fully-fledged proposal could then be developed and communicated to the Secretariat by a Party no less than one hundred and fifty days before the opening of the session. The Secretariat would then circulate the proposal to all the Parties and any comments on the text by the Parties would have to be communicated to the Secretariat not less than 60 days before the opening of

the session. Immediately after the last day of submission, the Secretariat would communicate all the comments submitted by that day, to the Parties.

67. Mr Stroud added that efforts should be made to enable as long a period of consultation as possible to allow sufficient time for necessary cross-checking.

68. In response to an enquiry whether any Party had come forward regarding this proposal, Mr Dereliev answered that the Secretariat had not been proactive in this respect as yet but had been awaiting guidance from the Standing Committee. He added that amongst the CAF range states, Uzbekistan, Georgia and the United Kingdom were the only AEWA Parties.

69. Mr Akanswasah (Vice-Chair/Uganda) suggested that the analysis process be taken forward. There was no necessity for the Secretariat to be proactive in soliciting the proposal.

70. Mr Mundkur stressed the importance of informing the CAF countries of the outcome of this meeting and the actions being taken.

71. The Chair concluded that, despite the varying views, the way forward mentioned above was in line with the mandate of the Standing Committee and the Rules of Procedure of the MOP.

Decision/Action 1 The current draft of the Analysis report will be revised according to the suggestions made above and submitted to the CMS Secretariat by 27 September 2013.

Decision/Action 2 The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will then prepare a detailed cover letter to all the AEWA Contracting Parties, describing the background of the initiative and outlining the options for steps (incl. time-schedule) to be taken to take the process forward, together with the revised analysis and give them a deadline for comments allowing sufficient time for national consultation.

Decision/Action 3 The CAF range states would be informed of the outcome of the meeting and the actions taken.

Agenda item 9. Contribution of the Standing Committee to the Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017

72. The Chair introduced this agenda item and referred to the Information document StC Inf. 9.2, a report on the progress of the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017, which had been prepared by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the AEWA Standing Committee and had been presented to MOP5 in 2012.

73. The Standing Committee should consider how it can support the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee report to MOP5. He suggested that the best way forward for the Standing Committee to contribute to achieving the targets of the Strategic Plan would be to advise the Standing Committee regional representatives to remind Parties in their respective regions that the targets in the Strategic Plan were still valid and that they should remember to report on the progress of those targets.

74. This suggestion was reiterated by Mr Barbieri, who recommended that the attention of the countries be drawn to those priority targets on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, on which they will have to report in the run-up to MOP6.

Decision/Action The StC regional representatives will contact the Contracting Parties in their regions with regard to reporting on the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan.

Agenda item 10. African Initiative for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in Africa

75. On behalf of the Secretariat, Mr Barbieri reported on the implementation of the African Initiative since MOP5 (*Doc. StC 9.10*). He gave a brief overview of the background of this initiative, which had been founded at MOP4 to coordinate and improve the implementation of the Agreement in the African region. One of the main activities under the AEWA African Initiative so far had been the development of a Plan of Action for the implementation of AEWA in Africa for the period 2012-2017 (PoAA), which had been adopted by MOP5 through Resolution 5.9. This provided for mechanisms and actors to support the implementation of the African Initiative and the PoAA, consisting of:

- An African Coordinator and part-time Programme Assistant based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat (overall coordination);
- Sub-regional Focal Point coordinators (to guide implementation at the sub-regional level); and
- A Technical Support Unit (TSU) based in France to provide technical support to implementation.

76. The first step undertaken by the Secretariat was to draft the Terms of Reference for the African Coordinator, part-time Programme Assistant, Sub-regional coordinators and Technical Support Unit, in collaboration with members of the Standing Committee and the Technical Support Unit. The Terms of Reference developed had been submitted to the present Meeting for formal approval (*Doc StC 9.13*). One of the points, which came up during the consultations was the suggestion to appoint an alternate to each Sub-Regional Coordinator. The Chair recommended dealing with this on a regional basis, which was seconded by the Secretariat.

77. In consultations between the Secretariat, the TSU and members of the Standing Committee, it had been agreed to convene sub-regional meetings with the main objectives of identifying priorities for implementation in the sub-regions and appointing the Sub-regional Focal Point coordinators.

78. The first sub-regional meeting took place in Algeria in June 2013, the second is planned to take place in South Africa in October 2013 followed by another in Senegal in December 2013. A steering mechanism to guide the activities of the Technical Support Unit had been established and a first meeting had taken place at Tour Du Valat, France, where the TSU is based.

79. The final element still in the early stages of creation was a fundraising committee for the African initiative. A first draft of the Terms of Reference had been prepared by the Secretariat, to be further developed in close collaboration with the Government of France and other stakeholders.

80. Apart from this, a number of International Single Species Action plans for African Species had been developed and international coordination mechanisms established. Another extremely encouraging development had been the expansion of membership of the Agreement in Africa; six further countries had acceded to the Agreement since June 2012. The credit for this goes mainly to the interim African Coordinator, who has worked very closely with the countries.

81. The African countries would also benefit from the development of the CMS-Family Manual and e-community for the National Focal Points. A few projects were being supported in Africa through the AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF). A very successful Training of Trainers workshop on the use of the Flyway Training Kit was held in 2013 in Kenya and another is planned for the Portuguese-speaking African countries in 2014, for which funding has already been obtained from the EU.

82. The Chair acknowledged the many ongoing activities and the ambitious PoAA. In this context, he welcomed the idea of a fundraising committee.

83. Also regretting the lack of resources to cover the activities in the PoAA, Ms Courouble called for contributions from countries. One urgent funding gap was related to the sub-regional meeting in Senegal planned for December 2013, which is being financed by the French Government; however

20,000 Euros still remained to be raised. She appealed to those present to examine all avenues related to private and international donors.

84. Mr Akankwasah (Vice-Chair/Uganda) suggested that the sub-regional coordinators could liaise with the respective regional representatives on the Standing Committee and profit from an exchange of information. This was welcomed by Mr Barbieri, who suggested integrating this in the ToR to establish the link between the functions. In the case of Algeria, both functions are carried out by one person.

85. Germany welcomed the good progress made, despite the ambitious nature of the PoAA. Germany was already supporting the initiative by providing the funds for the position of Programme Assistant. Further areas to which Germany was contributing were the Wadden Sea Project and powerline issues..

86. The Chair thanked both Germany and France for their continuing support, particularly with regard to the positions of Programme Assistant and support to the TSU.

87. Mr Barbieri reported on the status of the recruitment of the Coordinator of the African Initiative for which MOP5 had agreed on the establishment of a 50% P2 Position together with the mandate to fundraise for complementary funding. Switzerland has provided the funds to cover the other 50% of the position for one year and had indicated willingness to extend this pledge for subsequent years: a long-term commitment could not be made due to internal regulations. The recruitment procedure had been launched in the UN system and the Secretariat hoped that the position could be filled by the first quarter of 2014.

88. The Chair declared the four above-mentioned Terms of Reference in connection with the implementation of the African Plan of Action as adopted.

Decision *The Meeting approved the ToR for the Programme Assistant, Coordinator of the African Initiative, technical Support Unit and Sub-Regional Coordinator. It was decided that the issue of installing an alternate Sub-Regional Coordinator should be dealt with on regional basis.*

Agenda item 11. National Reports and Online Reporting Process

89. Mr Dereliev introduced the revised format for the national report cycle to MOP6, prepared by the Technical Committee (*Doc. StC 9.11*).

90. The first successful online reporting process was carried out for MOP5 in 2012. The analysis of the reports submitted fed into the assessment of the progress of implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan. Various Resolutions adopted by MOP5, relating to agrochemicals, renewable energy and climate change, for example, had been taken into account in the revision process. The feedback from the Parties for the previous reporting cycle and that of UNEP-WCMC, who were commissioned to carry out the analysis of the reports, also provided valuable directions.

91. The revised format should be in the system by the end of the year and the new reporting cycle for MOP6 would be launched in January 2014, which will provide the Parties with one year until the deadline for submission of reports. The data from the previous cycle would already be pre-filled so it just has to be verified or amended as necessary.

92. Ms Courouble welcomed the improvements and thanked the Secretariat for all the efforts made regarding this comprehensive revision. She asked if the report could be filled in offline due to difficulties with internet connections in some regions.

93. Mr Dereliev confirmed that the offline version was high on the agenda and depended on the availability of funds, however it would not be available for the next cycle. The Secretariat had

developed the system with no cash expenditure, however in order to take it to the next level, funding would have to be found as the work had to be done by programmers.

94. He reported that the Secretariat was communicating with UNEP-WCMC and a budgeted and itemized list of points had been compiled. Technical support from UNEP-WCMC to CMS COP11 and AEWA MOP6 reporting cycles would be free-of-charge.

95. The AEWA Information Officer, Mr Keil pointed out the long-term larger vision behind the development of the Online National Reporting System (ORS), i.e. that the ORS was built as a system which could be used by multiple MEAs, which would have technical, financial and administrative advantages in the long-run and that CMS and AEWA would join forces with other MEAs using the same system, which will ultimately lead to cost sharing and more harmonized reporting experiences for countries.

96. The UNEP/DELIC-led MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative and the resulting InforMEA⁵ portal was founded with the goal of bringing MEAs together to work on issues such as the ORS development and a sub-working group on the ORS has been established within this coordinating mechanism. Collective sponsorship is urgently needed for further development of the ORS product in collaboration with WCMC. Mr Stroud pointed out that the Ramsar Convention could also be approached regarding the sharing of some technical aspects for developing an offline version.

97. Mr Chambers concurred that the current and long-term expense of the Online Reporting System was an example of how joining forces with other MEAs would benefit all those concerned. He believed that support from the InforMEA project would help very much in making progress with the tasks still to be dealt with.

98. The Meeting took note of the report and the Chair concluded that continuous development and dialogue with all stakeholders should be upheld.

Decision *The Standing Committee approved the revised format for national reporting to MOP6.*

Agenda item 12. Implementation Review Process (IRP)

99. Mr Dereliev presented an update on the progress in the implementation of open cases (*Doc. StC 9.12*).

- *Syria* - illegal hunting of the endangered Sociable Lapwing. This case was on hold due to the complicated situation in the country.
- *Montenegro* – drainage of the Salina of Ulcinj for tourism development. The Minister of Sustainable Development and Management had welcomed a joint IRP mission with CMS, Ramsar and the Bern Convention. Communication had, however, come to a standstill due to the fact that the Focal Point had left the Ministry. The Secretariat had been waiting for a response from the Ministry since April 2013.
- *Bulgaria* – potential windfarm development project adjacent to Lake Durankulak, a Ramsar site with the highest concentration of the globally threatened Red-breasted Goose. After a long correspondence with the Government related to a court case whereby the project had been approved, then reversed and finally the reversal had been annulled, the Secretariat had been trying to obtain feedback since July 2013. All efforts to contact the Government since then to obtain information on the current status of an appeal on the part of the Ministry, the current state of the development of the project and the possible acceptance of an IRP mission, had been in vain. Mr Dereliev suggested that a letter from the Standing Committee Chair may have more impact.

100. The Chair regretted the fact that there was no budget foreseen for the IRP activities. These were very important issues. He suggested that the AEWA Trust Fund could provide an opportunity to

⁵ <http://www.informea.org/>

release funds for the IRP activities. The costs of a joint consultant, where necessary, could be shared. He urged the Secretariat to keep up the dialogue with the countries involved and praised the Secretariat for handling the ongoing cases so well.

101. Mr Dereliev went on to report on potential IRP cases, currently being looked into. The first was in France and related to a further windfarm development in an area overlapping a site designated for the conservation of the Eurasian Crane as a stopover site

102. Ms Courouble provided an update on the case, which was not new. The project had been developed in 2011 and reviewed by the local Prefect. The proposal had been rejected as it had not provided sufficient information. It had also been reviewed by the local representative of the Ministry of Environment. The proposal had then been re-submitted with a development plan up to 2020 in the area, starting in 2014. No building permit had been deposited so the precise location was not known. The formal procedures were in place and an EIA was necessary. The local representative of the Ministry would continue to follow the case closely and report.

103. Mr Dereliev remarked that a Strategic Environment Assessment was required under the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on Mitigating the Impacts of Infrastructure Development for a project of this magnitude. He went on to suggest that the developer be advised on the status of that area and encouraged to look elsewhere, considering the flyways of the cranes in particular when they enquired about the land for developments. He suggested that the Standing Committee keep this case as a watch brief and France and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat would update them on the prevention of a potential IRP case.

104. Responding to a question on the criteria for choosing cases for an IRP mission, Mr Dereliev replied that the Technical Committee acts as a filter to assess potential cases, should a surplus occur.

105. He reported on the case of bird netting in Egypt threatening huge numbers of songbirds, other landbirds as well as some waterbirds. There had been a lot of publicity about this. An enquiry in cooperation with BirdLife international was planned, however this had been put on hold temporarily to await for Government transition. The issue was also spreading into Libya so this would need to be looked into. He agreed with delegates that the socio-economic drivers behind the netting should be investigated, although it was known that there was an element of recreational activity and indiscriminate catching.

106. Mr Barbieri reported of an offshore windfarm development in Sicily, Italy. The local Municipality had approached the Secretariat and although this project had already received a favourable EIA, it was apparently planned along two known migratory routes for species of concern. No details were known as yet and action would be taken after the meeting.

107. Ms Crockford (BirdLife international) reported on two issues in Iceland: The first related to seabird bycatch in gillnets. BirdLife was in touch with Iceland regarding steps to be taken to gather data on this issue.

108. The second issue related to large-scale afforestation of lowland breeding wader habitat, which was a great threat due to the powerful forestry lobby. The issue would also be put to the Bern Convention in December 2013 so that hopefully a joint AEWA, Bern Convention and CMS mission could be organised to support Iceland in dealing with this issue.

Decision/Action The Secretariat will provide the Standing Committee with information on potential IRP cases and support the Standing Committee as appropriate.

Agenda item 13. Revision of the Modus Operandi for the AEWA Small Grant Fund

109. Mr Dereliev introduced a revision of the Modus Operandi for the AEWA Small Grant Fund (SGF) proposed by the Secretariat (*Doc. StC 9.13*). He explained that the original version had been

adopted in 2009 and that this was the first revision, which had been based on experience gained over the years and feedback from applicants. This first proposed revision of the document aimed to provide greater precision and clarity with regard to the information requested from project proponents, as well as guidance on the evaluation of project proposals. It also eliminated a small number of redundant indicators in the SGF application forms. The following documents had been reviewed as part of the proposed revision: Guidelines for the Operation of the AEWA Small Grants Fund, Grant Application Form, Endorsement Form, List of Countries Eligible for the AEWA Small Grants Fund, and Project Proposal Assessment Form.

110. He noted that both cycles so far (2012 and 2013) had been limited to proposals from the African region; funding from the core budget was limited to 20,000 EUR and voluntary contributions from France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom were also added to the support to projects from the African region. The call for applications would be extended to other regions as soon as more funding became available. As the Small Grant Fund is currently for proposals from the African region only, any funding could be seen as being a contribution towards the implementation of the African Plan of Action.

111. Mr Akankwasah expressed concern related to the first of the proprieties listed in bullet points on page 4 of Doc. StC 9.13, which is extracted from the MOP3 ‘*Guidelines for determining priorities for AEWA financial support*’, prepared by the TC. This priority relates to project proposals which are ‘international in geographical scale, involving two or more AEWA Range States’. This did not seem appropriate as it may exclude proposals which are limited to one critical site; importance should be put on the contribution a project makes to conservation and its focus rather than its geographical coverage.

112. Mr Dereliev explained that this list represented a set of complimentary criteria, which is only applied to projects equal in scoring. Due to the limited funds, the Secretariat encouraged only the strongest proposals to be submitted.

113. Mr Stroud commented on the procedure of application, observing that the applicant may not know who the AEWA National Focal Point in his/her country is. He suggested adding a footnote: ‘*further information available from the Secretariat*’.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Standing Committee approved the revised version of the Modus Operandi for the AEWA Small Grant Fund.</i>
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<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat will add the above-suggested footnote.</i>
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Agenda item 14. Report on the Implementation and Revision of the Communication Strategy

114. Mr Keil referred to Doc. StC 9.14 and Resolution 5.5, whereby the Contracting Parties had initiated a revision process for the existing Communication Strategy, which had originally been adopted through Resolution 3.10 in 2005. The revision process would result in a more realistic, up-to-date and practical communication strategy for the Agreement and take into account the ‘Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS Family’ approved by CMS COP10.

115. The task of revising and up-dating the Communication Strategy would be given to an independent expert consultant and would include a desk study, surveys and drafting of the document itself. A workshop to kick-off this work, bringing together key stakeholders is also being considered, however funds needed to be secured (up to 24,000 EUR for the revision by the consultant and a further 40,000 EUR for a consultative workshop). Approximately 20,000 EUR were available from Germany’s annual contribution and a further contribution could possibly be withdrawn from leftovers of budgets of previous years.

116. He stressed that the revision of the communication strategy should try to take into account current political and economic realities, capacity and the true financial resources available both at the national and international level to carry out identified communication, education and training activities. He

stated that, in his view, one of the shortfalls of the existing strategy was that it was overly ambitious with a Communication Action Plan which had an unrealistic set of activities for which only a very limited amount of funding was made available.

117. Future communication activities need to be more focused and aligned with key strategic objectives of AEWA and the CMS Family as a whole, so that important activities such as the African Initiative, World Migratory Bird Day and other implementation work being carried out in the framework of the Agreement reached Governments and other key stakeholders along the African-Eurasian Flyway.

118. Responding to a question referring to the extent of this process and the expense involved, Mr Keil explained that the current Communication Strategy, developed in 2005, was still valid and useful in parts but needed revision and up-dating, in order to be more relevant and up-to-date and a more effective tool to providing concrete guidance and priorities.

119. Other interventions related to common communication services, which could become a part of the Future Shape process and thus open further possibilities, such as providing more assistance; the need to assess what had worked so far and what had not as times changed; and the effectiveness of measures proposed, which should be closely looked at.

120. Implementation activities included the establishment of the Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) network, also initiated by MOP5 in 2012, which was growing. The CEPA Focal Points would disseminate communication activities in their countries and, as far as possible work together with the Ramsar Convention CEPA Focal Points. Another project led by the Secretariat and funded by the Government of Germany related to the development of websites for the International Species Working Groups, which were ready and had been handed over to the respective Coordinators, who would take over their maintenance.

121. A very successful Training of Trainers Workshop using the Flyway Training Kit⁶ had taken place in Naivasha, Kenya in May 2013 for trainers from Eastern and Southern Africa. The workshop was linked to a regional World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) event which took place at Lake Elementeita organized by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) with support from AEWA, through funding received from the German Government. Funding by the German Government had also enabled the development of a Flyway Partnership Website for information on the work of the Partners using the Flyway Training Kit and the Critical Sites Network Tool (CSN)⁷, which would be launched before the end of 2014.

122. Other activities included publications, the regular AEWA E-newsletter (for which Mr Keil strongly encouraged participants to submit stories of common interest) and many day-to-day communication activities.

123. Joint CMS Family projects included the CMS Family Website, Online Workspaces for CMS Scientific Advisory Bodies, the Online Reporting System (ORS), CMS & AEWA Cooperation in the Area of capacity building – National Focal Point Training Manual and workshops (EC ENRTP/UNEP Project) and global World Migratory Bird Day campaign (WMBD). WMBD had been growing from year to year and had broken all records in 2013 with 350 registered events in 86 countries, including the very colourful and inspiring central event at Lake Elementeita in Kenya.

124. Referring to Doc. 9.15, he outlined the responsibilities of the CEPA Focal Points. Efforts would be made to continue building this network (17 CEPA Focal Points had been nominated to date) and to provide more guidance for countries regarding the nomination procedure.

⁶ <http://wow.wetlands.org/CAPACITYBUILDING/TRAININGAWARENESSRAISING/WOWTrainingResources/tabid/1688/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁷ <http://csntool.wingsoverwetlands.org/csn/default.html#state=home>

125. The Meeting took note of the concept for the revision of the Communication Strategy and accepted it on an interim basis, running up to MOP6. The Chair urged the Standing Committee to revitalise contacts in different countries, including NGOs to promote WMBD and also with regard to appointing national AEWA CEPA Focal Points.

Agenda item 15. New Arabic Translation of the Agreement Text

126. Mr Barbieri reported that Mr Mohammad Sulayem, Advisor on International Cooperation, the Saudi Wildlife Authority (SWA) had been mandated by MOP6 to coordinate the finalisation of the revised Arabic translation of the Agreement text for endorsement by the Standing Committee. The deadline for this had been the end of 2012. The reason for the necessity of a revision had been complaints from the countries that the Arabic version did not fully correspond to other language versions.

127. The Secretariat had been in constant contact with the colleagues working on the revision. Although a finalised text was not available yet, work had been ongoing, also with regard to the incorporation of the amendments agreed upon by MOP5. The case had been discussed with the Arabic-speaking member of the Standing Committee from Algeria, who confirmed that he would liaise with those involved in the revision process to solicit the completion of the work so that the text could be adopted by the Standing Committee by correspondence in due course.

128. The Chair thanked Algeria and those involved in the revision process. He looked forward to the finalisation so that the revised and updated version could be made available to the Arabic-speaking countries as soon as possible.

Agenda item 16. International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs) and International Single Species Management Plan (ISSMP)

129. Mr Dereliev introduced *Doc. StC 9.16* on progress in the coordination of adopted Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs) and Single Species Management Plan (ISSMP) and the development of new ones.

130. A total of 19 ISSAP and one ISSMP had been endorsed by the MOP so far. The Secretariat had been active in the last few years setting up coordination mechanisms (International Species Working Groups – ISWGs) for these plans and nine had already been established. According to feedback received, these had proved to be very useful. The most advanced ISWG so far, which acts as a model mechanism for the development of further Working Groups is that of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG), the coordination of which was based at the Secretariat and run by a full-time staff member, funded by the Government of Norway.

131. Based on that for the LWfG, websites and intranet workspaces have been developed for the ISWGs and were being handed over to the ISWG Coordinators for moderation and further maintenance. Other ISWGs had been developed in cooperation with BirdLife International, RSPB and WWT as well as a secondment of the Government of the Netherlands.

132. For adopted Single Species Action Plans where the involvement of the Secretariat and the establishment of an ISWG were not considered a priority, stakeholders would be encouraged to take the initiative to establish AEWA Species Expert Groups, the Terms of Reference for which were adopted at TC11 together with a list of priority species.

133. A detailed list of AEWA Single/Multi Species Action and Management Plans, which had been adopted by the MOP or are under development, was attached to *Doc. 9.16.*, in Table 1. Plans under development, which would be presented to MOP6 in 2015 for adoption included those for the Shoebill, Grey Crowned Crane, Southern African Seabirds – Multi-species Action Plan, Taiga Bean Goose, Eurasian Curlew, and the Long-tailed Duck. In addition, he noted that Table 2 annexed to *Doc.*

9.16 was a priority list for the development of new AEWA Single Species Action Plans (as adopted by the AEWA Technical Committee at its 11th Meeting in Accra, Ghana in August 2012). The impact of climate change and other factors had also been taken into account when compiling this list.

134. The ISSAPs for the LWfG and the Northern Bald Ibis were currently being revised and expected to be presented to MOP6 for adoption. In the case of the LWfG, contradicting comments had been submitted by the Range States, particularly related to the Fennoscandian population so that more time would be needed to reconcile these.

135. Ms Courouble referred to the ISSAP for the Black-tailed Godwit (BtG), for which a moratorium had been extended in France. However this had been difficult for the hunting community to accept and would be easier to justify on the basis of information on what other countries had been doing to implement the action plan.

136. Mr Dereliev noted that France had participated in the last regional meeting of the BtG ISWG; he would establish a contact to the Coordinator of the ISWG for further information and have this translated for dissemination. He stressed that for some species 20 years of conservation work was needed to stop and reverse the decrease of a single population – this was a process, which took time and effort.

137. Mr Stroud added that Bird's Directive, Article 12, which concerns the general reporting obligations of the Member States and European Commission, was also a source of information about the implementation of the ISSAP for the BtG in other EU countries.

138. Germany was happy to learn that the Workshop for the development of the Long-tailed Duck ISSAP was being hosted by Estonia. He congratulated France on the hunting ban, which was very encouraging for Germany. On the other hand he questioned the benefit of funding so many measures for conserving a species, which was being shot elsewhere,

139. Ms Crockford also welcomed the moratorium in France and stressed that more needed to be done in the Netherlands with regard to the BtG.

140. Mr Middleton stressed that conservation was about hard choices and that hunting had little impact on its success. The development of the ISSAPs for the Eurasian Curlew and the Shoebill represented an exemplary balanced approach.

141. Mr Middleton stressed that conservation was about hard choices and that hunting had little impact on the key issue facing BtG, namely recruitment. It has instead caused alienation and an illusion of success. The development of the ISSAPs for the Eurasian Curlew and the Shoebill represented an opportunity to have a more balanced approach.

142. On the subject of the ISSAP for the Shoebill, an action-planning workshop had taken place on 9 - 12 October 2012 in Entebbe, Uganda. Following consultations with the range states and the AEWA Technical Committee, the draft Single Species Action Plan had been presented to the Standing Committee as *Doc. 9.17* for preliminary approval; final approval was foreseen to take place at MOP6 in June 2015.

<i>Decision</i>	<i>The Standing Committee approved the ISSAP for the Conservation of the Shoebill on an interim basis, pending final approval at MOP6.</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>The Secretariat would disseminate information on the international implementation of the BtG ISSAP.</i>

Agenda item 17. AEWA Participation in and Collaboration with other Relevant Bodies and Processes

a. Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS and CMS Family

143. Mr Chambers introduced a report on the development of the new Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015 – 2023, developed within the framework of CMS, and its participation in the process (*Doc. StC 9.19*). He explained that the current CMS Strategic Plan was valid until 2014 and that the future Strategic Plan was being developed by a Strategic Plan Working Group (SPWG), made up of regional representatives of the Parties, supported by a consultant, Dave Pritchard. The first draft was a broad plan for all migratory species; sub-targets developed by the daughter agreements and other consultative input would be incorporated in the next version, and a final draft would be presented by the SPWG to the CMS COP11 in 2014.

144. The plan is closely linked to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as the Future Shape process and would provide a guiding framework for all work supporting the conservation of migratory species, while allowing sub-targets or individual plans for specific CMS instruments. A technical Companion Volume should also be prepared to support the Plan's implementation, which would *inter alia* identify implementation tools in more detail.

145. From the perspective of the Secretariat, Mr Barbieri reported that the draft was currently in distribution for comments by the end of September 2013 so the StC could still provide comments. The Secretariat had already provided comments on an earlier version.

146. The Chair stressed the importance that all the agreements should relate to the drafting process and he looked forward to seeing the final draft and annexed compendium volume in 2014. The Secretariat should give appropriate input to the draft.

147. Mr Stroud enquired about the link between the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species and the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 and if there were any plans to refresh this beyond 2017.

148. Responding, Mr Barbieri explained that MOP6 in 2015 would assess the current AEWA Strategic Plan and give guidance as to how to develop it further and how this would relate to the new plan and companion volume for migratory species. An overlap would occur in the triennium between MOP6 and MOP7, which would allow AEWA to take the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species into account in the development of its new Strategic Plan.

b. Other Bodies and Processes

149. Mr Taej Mundkur (Wetlands International) reported on a new initiative: *Flyway Linking Organisations and Wetlands* (FLOW), addressing several AEWA Resolutions and priorities to strengthen the capacity of local management agencies to better protect and manage critically important sites for Migratory Waterbirds in the AEWA region, through exchange and capacity building.

150. It was based on Resolution 5.20 submitted by France, and aimed to promote twinning arrangements between northern and southern sites for a renewable period of three years. Joint project proposals and site management activities would be encouraged under the initiative. In addition the initiative also addresses targets 1.2 and 3.2 of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa⁸ with regard to site-twinning projects and monitoring of waterbirds.

151. This programme would also present an opportunity to strengthen awareness raising, capacity building and species conservation using existing AEWA tools, such as conservation guidelines and species action plans.

152. The ultimate target was to link at least 20 critically important wetlands across the AEWA region within the period 2013 - 2015. Mr Mundkur stressed that this scheme would contribute to the implementation of AEWA in a number of ways and called for endorsement and support from the

⁸ http://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/aewa_poa_for_africa_final.pdf

Standing Committee for the identification of sites and other initiatives linked to this, as well as for the mobilisation of badly needed resources.

153. The Chair confirmed the strong support of the Standing Committee for this initiative and that the Secretariat should be involved, as necessary and as feasible.

154. Mr Stroud concurred that this was an excellent programme and that the time limitation would help to maximise information and knowledge exchange.

155. Mr Mundkur went on to report on another joint AEWA/CMS initiative (*Destination Flyways Project*), in cooperation with the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO⁹), based in Bonn, Germany on sustainable tourism along flyways in order to benefit habitats, species and people. The German Government had provided funding for the development of the project proposal, whereby eight sites had been chosen for assessment, including the Djoudj National Park in Senegal and the Wadden Sea in the South-eastern part of the North Sea. He noted that this project complimented the relevant AEWA Conservation Guidelines¹⁰.

156. On behalf of Szabolcs Nagy from Wetlands International he informed the Meeting that the online database for the International Waterbird Census (IWC) in the African-Eurasian region would be going live that week. This would support work in the field. The online data entry system had been run in several countries and would be used in the African waterbird census. Various other projects and efforts involving a range of key stakeholders were ongoing to help develop the IWC, such as in West Africa led by BirdLife International and in the North African countries, led by Tour Du Valat.

Decision *The Standing Committee welcomed the FLOW initiative.*

Agenda item 18. Financial and Administrative Matters

a. Execution of the 2009-2012 and 2013-2015 budgets

157. Mr Barbieri reported on income and expenditures in the periods 2009-2012 and 2013-2015 (*Doc. StC 9.20*). He reported on the status of payment of annual contributions by Parties, noting that, in general, the Parties complied well with their financial obligations. The unpaid amount in 2012 amounted to ca. 119,000 Euros and in 2013 to ca. 133,000 Euros. The Secretariat had been active in reminding Parties in arrears and would continue doing so.

158. Regarding expenditure, the core budget showed a positive balance of ca. 380,000 Euros at the end of 2012, whereby savings had been made mainly in the personnel budget lines. Fundraising for voluntary contributions in 2012-2013 had been reasonably successful and the Secretariat was grateful to Parties and other donors, however there had been a noticeable downward trend, probably a reflection of the difficult financial situation in many countries.

159. Mr. Barbieri suggested the possible use of contributions of new Parties which had joined the Agreement after MOP5, and whose contributions were not included in the budget adopted by MOP5, for training of staff. Currently UN policies made it mandatory for a minimum of five days of training for each staff member per year, and resources available in the approved budget were insufficient.

160. The Chair congratulated the Secretariat on a well-handled budget and encouraged staff to further strengthen their capacity to support the Agreement, by taking advantage of training opportunities. He strongly supported the suggestion to increase funds for that purpose.

Decision *The Meeting decided that the Secretariat is authorized to use assessed contributions from Parties having joined the Agreement after AEWA MOP5 to cover the costs of Secretariat's staff training in excess of the allotment of BL 3201 in the 2013-2015 approved budget.*

⁹ <http://www2.unwto.org/>

¹⁰ http://www.unep-awea.org/publications/conservation_guidelines/pdf/cg_7new.pdf

b. Migratory Species Champion Programme

161. The Chair introduced this agenda item, explaining that this was a new initiative for raising funds.

162. Mr Chambers reported that this had recently been endorsed by ASCOBANS Advisory Committee and that some good models of champion programmes had already been established.

163. Mr Dereliev presented the *Migratory Species Champion Programme* concept (Doc. StC 9.21), which was a CMS-led initiative, jointly developed by CMS and AEWA for the CMS Family to secure sustainable funding for the CMS Family instruments. Funding was urgently needed, i.e. a predictable and substantive flow of funding. This was currently a huge challenge due to the insufficient visibility of our instruments and their relevance in the wider political agenda of Parties. Donors were often not aware of what was needed, thus funding needed to be targeted at specific and immediate needs to enable the CMS Family to deliver against its mandates. The Champion Programme would streamline current funding work rather than change it.

164. BirdLife ran a similar programme and in order to avoid overlap but rather take a complementary approach, it was being considered to work in coordination by defining the species and areas of work. Printing materials and maintaining the website would have a significant impact involving a minimal investment only.

165. Governments, companies, organisations and individuals who are willing to support efforts to conserve migratory species and their habitats could become a *Champion*. Champions were expected to provide mid- and long-term funding for one or more specific CMS Family initiatives.

Decision *The Standing Committee fully endorsed AEWA's involvement in the Migratory Species Champion Programme.*

c. Administrative and Personnel Matters

166. The Meeting had adjourned to discuss the issue of the *CMS Executive Secretary Proposal for Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination between AEWA and CMS* (Doc. 9.22), which included the issue of the recruitment of the AEWA Executive Officer. The closed session had been attended by the Standing Committee Members, other Party representatives, the CMS Executive Secretary and the AEWA Acting Executive Secretary.

167. Following the closed session, the Chair reported on the outcome of the discussion regarding the recruitment and mandate of the new Executive Officer. The Standing Committee had decided to offer the appointment as Executive Officer of AEWA to the candidate that had emerged as the most suitable from the recruitment process conducted by UNEP. The appointment will be on an interim basis, until MOP6 reviews the situation and considers a proposal for a possible joint Executive Secretary for AEWA and CMS, to be developed by the Executive Secretary of CMS, in consultation with the Executive Officer of AEWA.

168. The proposal should include an analysis of the effectiveness of such an arrangement, the tasks and functions that the proposed Joint Executive Secretary would have, and what resources such an arrangement would redirect towards implementation support priorities. The Executive Secretary of CMS would also bring the proposal to the CMS for its consideration.

169. The Standing Committee had also requested the interim Executive Officer of AEWA and invited the Executive Secretary of CMS to develop further synergies between AEWA and CMS and take actions to merge common services and common areas in an effort to redirect the focus of the Secretariats towards strengthening implementation support.

Decision *The decisions of the Standing Committee are outlined in Annex II to this report.*

Agenda item 19. Date and Venue of the 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee

170. Mr Barbieri proposed mid-March 2015 as an appropriate date for the 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee, in connection with MOP6 preparations.

171. The Chair noted that while the date of MOP6 was currently uncertain, four to five months before the next session of the MOP would provide sufficient time for discussions and allow the Secretariat to finalise documents.

172. Uganda offered to host the 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee in 2015. The offer would be confirmed as soon as the Government had been consulted.

173. The Chair thanked Uganda for this tentative offer and looked forward to chairing the next Standing Committee Meeting in Africa.

Agenda item 20. Any Other Business

174. Mr Abdoulaye Ndiaye (Tour du Valat/Senegal) reported that the next Pan-African Ornithological Congress would take place in Senegal in 2016. He noted the link to the African Initiative and that the support of the Secretariat and Parties would be needed to face the challenges in the context of this meeting. He had been nominated as Chair. He requested for this information to be shared with the CMS Family.

175. The Chair confirmed that the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats would liaise with him on their representation at this important event.

Agenda item 21. Closure of the Meeting

176. The Chair acknowledged that the Meeting had had to deal with some difficult items and discussions had been long. In the case of the CAF Action Plan, both the interests of the CAF range states and the present AEWA Parties had been taken care of and a good approach had been found with regard to the issue of the AEWA Executive Officer and the requirements of the Future Shape process.

177. He thanked all those present for their engagement and hoped that they had enjoyed the Meeting and that they would continue to be active in the intersessional period.

178. Ms Courouble thanked the Chair for the lively and pleasant chairmanship and the Government of Norway for hosting the Meeting.

179. Mr Barbieri also mentioned that the agenda had included complex issues but that he was happy with the outcome of the Meeting. On behalf of the Secretariat, he thanked Norway for the assistance and hospitality received and that it had been a real pleasure working with the Chair as host. He also expressed his gratitude to the Government of Norway and to the participants for their contribution to the good outcome.

180. He closed the meeting with some personal words as this Meeting would be his last as AEWA Acting Executive Secretary. He had been in this position for longer than originally expected and he had considered the experience to have been instructive and rewarding. He had inherited a 'well oiled-machine' so that there had been limited need to look after what was being done by the colleagues and he thanked the AEWA staff for the quality of their work throughout some difficult and complex times during the last two years. His main responsibility had been the general management of the Secretariat and the financial aspects. He had taken the Agreement through the transition period and he had been happy to have been a part of the history of AEWA and thanked all those present for the support he had been given.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

Decision of the Standing Committee with regard to the recruitment of the new AEWA Executive Officer and the future collaboration with the CMS-family

Acknowledging the importance of the Future Shape Process to increase efficiency and enhance synergies in the whole CMS Family, and AEWA Resolution 5.17 that requests the Standing Committee “to contribute, where appropriate, to activities identified in Annex 1 of CMS Resolution 10.9” ,

Aware of the greater international picture coming from Rio+20 and other processes stressing the importance of developing further synergies among MEAs,

Cognizant of the need to appoint an Executive Officer as soon as possible, and of the important role that AEWA Resolution 5.21 sets out for the Standing Committee in making the final selection,

Understanding the opportunity in timing that the appointment process of the AEWA Executive Officer presents to developing stronger synergies between AEWA and the CMS in accordance with the Future Shape Process and AEWA Resolution 5.17.

The Standing Committee:

1. *Decides* to take a decision to agree with the appointment of the Executive Officer on an interim basis to be reviewed by MOP6 in light of a possible appointment of a Joint Executives Secretary as described below;
2. *Requests* the interim Executive Officer of AEWA and *invites* the Executive Secretary of CMS to develop further synergies between AEWA and CMS and take actions to merge common services and common areas in an effort to redirect the focus of the Secretariats towards strengthening implementation support;
3. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of CMS in consultation with the Executive Officer of AEWA to bring a proposal to the AEWA MOP6 on a possible joint Executive Secretary for AEWA and CMS for its consideration. The proposal should include an analysis of the effectiveness of such an arrangement, the task and functions that the proposed Joint Executive Secretary would include, and what resources such an arrangement would redirect towards implementation support priorities;
4. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of CMS to bring the proposal of a Joint Executive Secretary for AEWA and CMS to the CMS for its consideration.