



9th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
20 – 23 April 2009, Zagreb, Croatia

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article VIII, Paragraph (h) of the Agreement, the Secretariat shall prepare, on an annual basis and for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, reports on the work of the Secretariat and on the implementation of the Agreement. In addition to this, the Secretariat has decided to report back to each meeting of the Technical and Standing Committees (TC, StC). It has been agreed by both Committees that a common report will be produced for both meetings. However, it has also been agreed, that for each meeting, the report will be updated to reflect the actual situation. Depending on the intervals between these meetings, the reports could differ slightly.

This report is divided into four sections:

1. General management; which includes policy/ administrative/ financial and human resources issues and cooperation with other organisations;
2. Information management;
3. Implementation and compliance; and
4. Project development.

The day-to-day work of the Agreement Secretariat, which includes responding to incoming mails, maintaining our extensive network, internal meetings with CMS, UNEP and/or UN Head of Agencies etc. are not specifically mentioned in this report.

The current report is based on the period since TC8, which took place from 3-5 March 2008, in Bonn, Germany.

1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Development of a Strategic Plan

In accordance with Resolution 3.9, the Standing Committee was instructed to prepare a Strategic Plan for the Agreement in close cooperation with the Technical Committee. The Secretariat contracted a Consultant to draft this Strategic Plan and the process was kicked off via a brainstorming session during the 4th meeting of the Standing Committee in 2006. The Strategic Plan was drafted in close consultation with the AEWA Secretariat. In early 2007, a workshop was held at the UN premises in Bonn to review and discuss the first draft of the Strategic Plan with TC Working Group 5. During this workshop, the proposed new National Reporting Format was compared and aligned with the Strategic Plan. The final draft of the Strategic Plan was adopted through Resolution 4.7 at the 4th session of the Meeting of Parties in 2008.

New Developments

Some developments are taking place within the AEWA region, which are of great interest for the future of the Agreement:

In early 2008, CMS launched the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Action Plan. CAF covers 30 Range States of which 16 are located within the AEWA Agreement Area. Also half of the populations listed in this Action Plan are already covered by AEWA. *There will be a need to look into a cooperation scheme with CAF to avoid duplication of efforts and also to avoid competition between the two instruments, potentially leading to confusion among AEWA-CAF Range States.*

The second issue of interest is the development of a Memorandum of Understanding for the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory raptors and owls. In 2007 the first meeting took place to discuss and adopt the Action Plan to be linked to this MoU and during a second meeting in 2008 the MoU was concluded. In this case, there is also a need to look into how AEWA could cooperate with this MoU and how competition between the two instruments could be avoided. All 118 AEWA Range States are also Range States to this MoU, the area of which stretches to the coast of China and encompasses many more countries. *Again, there is a need to look into how AEWA could cooperate with this MoU and how competition between the two instruments could be avoided.*

Several Range States have indicated that the growing number of instruments to conserve migratory birds will not lead to a substantial increase of funds to implement these treaties. On the contrary, it is likely that more or less the same amount of funds will have to be shared amongst a growing number of specialized bird Agreements/MoUs.

At the 9th Conference of the Parties to CMS, which took place in December 2008 in Italy, it was decided, through Resolution 9.12, to establish an ad hoc Working Group on the future shape of CMS. Mr. Oliver Biber (Switzerland) was nominated as Chair of this Working Group and a first meeting with representatives of the CMS Family based in Bonn took place on 27 February 2009 at the UN Campus in Bonn. In addition to this working group, COP9 also agreed to establish an open-ended Scientific Council Working Group on flyways. For the future shape of CMS and particularly for the future of AEWA these two Working Groups are of extreme importance and therefore the Secretariat will participate in both.

Fundraising

At MOP3 it was decided to more or less flesh out all activities from the core budget. Besides its decision that the core budget should only be covered by the annual contribution, MOP3 also decided to establish two additional pillars, namely one dealing with activities and the other one with travel costs of funded delegates. The Secretariat noted that raising funds for meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Agreement poses additional and persisting challenges. Due to the fact that no funds could be secured for the 5th Standing Committee meeting in 2007, the decision had to be taken to postpone that meeting to mid-2008. MOP4 took note of this and also decided that the cost of the Technical and Standing Committee meetings should, in future, be covered by the core budget.

Since MOP3, a total amount of € 808,593 has been received in the form of voluntary contributions. Approximately € 129,000 was allocated to activities of the CMS-led Avian Influenza Task Force. The remaining funds were earmarked for International Implementation Priority projects and for meetings of the Technical and/or Standing Committees.

As agreed by the Contracting Parties at MOP2 as well as at MOP3, the Secretariat was permitted to set aside the annual contribution of new Parties until the next MOP to cover the costs for ongoing activities and the launching of new initiatives. In 2006 and 2007 a total amount of € 264,000 was received from new Parties. For 2008 the total amount is € 148,000. The Standing Committee agreed to allocate these funds for *inter alia*: the drafting of international reviews, financial support towards the GEF flyway project, the development, coordination and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans, consultancies including surveys, implementation of the Communication Strategy, and organisation of MOP4. The funds received through this mechanism were effectively used and have been proven to be crucial for the successful implementation of the Agreement.

The amount needed to fully implement the International Implementation Priorities (IIP) 2006 – 2008 totals € 5,2 million. Based on this figure, the Secretariat was only able to secure approximately 10 percent of the total amount needed. As indicated earlier, one of the main reasons that Contracting Parties were not in a position to fully support the implementation of the Agreement is the economic recess they are confronted

with. This has led to severe cuttings in their budgets which has had an (in)direct impact on the level of possible support to the AEWA Secretariat.

The Secretariat is very grateful for the financial support received since MOP3. It should however be noted that this level of support is significantly lower than initially estimated, which, in turn, has a negative impact especially on the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project. By the end of 2008, additional funds had been received to cover part of the existing financial gap of the WOW project. Due to this, the shortfall has been reduced to approximately € 600,000. The fundraising for this project will continue in the year to come.

In addition to the need for fundraising for IIP 2006 – 2008 and the WOW project, as a matter of priority, we also had to fundraise an amount of € 200,000 for the organisation of MOP4 in Madagascar. Due to the support of several donors, all the funds needed for MOP4 could be secured.

Recruitment of Staff

Fixed-term staff

As agreed by MOP3, by the end of 2008 the post of Information Officer was established. This position had been provided free of charge by the Government of Germany since 2005, through the Junior Professional Officer programme. At the end of January 2009, UNEP agreed to appoint Florian Keil as AEWA Information Officer, thereby securing the continuity of ongoing AEWA and WOW activities.

MOP4 agreed to upgrade the post of Technical Officer from P-2 to P-3 and to transfer the post of Programme Officer from L-2 to P-2. The recruitment process for both posts is underway and it is expected that by August 2009, the selected candidates will be able to enter on duty.

Temporary staff

With the growing number of Contracting Parties and the fact that AEWA is becoming more and more well-known, the Secretariat is facing a steady increase in workload. To cope with this increase, the Standing Committee agreed to extend the contract of our Programme Officer (L-2), Ms. Catherine Lehmann (French/German), until 31 August 2009. Her main tasks are/have been to draft a number of international reviews, to support the work of the AEWA Information Unit, to develop project/programme proposals for submission to potential donors, and last but not least to organise the logistical arrangements for MOP4.

Interns

In close cooperation with Mr. Henning Lilje (CMS Administrative Assistant and Coordinator for the Interns Programme) the following interns have supported the work of the AEWA Secretariat:

Name	Nationality	Main tasks carried out in the period¹
Ms. Samar Gholmié	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 (7 Jan. – April '08)
Mr. Johannes Schramm	German	To assist with the development of the TC Forum and WMBD 2008 website (15 Jan. – 15 April '08)
Ms. Nickoletta Kolumburda	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 (7 Jan. – April '08)
Ms. Lea Koeder	German	To assist with the preparations for WMBD 2008 and the organisation of side events/exhibitions during CBD COP (4 April – 15 June 2008).
Ms. Svetlana Otto	Russian	To assist with synthesising and analysing the National Reports for MOP4. Translation and proofreading of official documents, correspondence and publications. (01.07 – 01.09.08 and 01.12.08–20.02.09).
Ms. Mareike Gröwe	German	To assist with Secretariat work, particularly with preparations for MOP4.
Ms. Aigerim Duimagambetova	Kazakh	Assisting the AEWA Information Unit with the management of the global World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign.
Ms. Nathalie Wrighton	British	Assisting the Technical Officer with the preparation of popular brochures as well as assisting the AEWA Information Unit with the production of the WMBD website.

¹ Besides these main tasks, all temporary staff supported the Secretariat in its day-to-day work.

Recruitment of Parties

Over the last three years less attention has been given to the recruitment of Parties. The reason behind this was lack of human resources but also the fact that, as brought up during the discussion regarding the Communication Strategy, it became clear that the view of several Contracting Parties and organisations is that the Secretariat should pay less attention to the recruitment of Parties and more to the implementation of the Agreement. However MOP4 signalled that we should increase our activities regarding the recruitment of Parties. Looking back it should be noted that in 2006 six countries joined, followed by one in 2007. In 2008 Norway, Estonia and Cyprus joined AEWA. Currently a number of countries are in the process of joining e.g. Azerbaijan, Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia. Besides the Secretariat, the organisation 'Oiseaux migrateurs du paléarctique' (OMPO) as well as Wetlands International and the wider WOW project team have played a role in winning new Range States to join AEWA, for which we are very grateful.

Cooperation with other Organisations

In early 2008, a Memorandum of Cooperation was concluded between OMPO and the AEWA Secretariat. This MoC formalises a strong existing cooperation with a long-standing tradition. In addition to the active role OMPO has been playing as an observer to the AEWA Technical Committee for the last 6 years, it has also continuously supported the recruitment of Parties to AEWA and enhanced the implementation of AEWA through its scientific and monitoring programmes on migratory birds in the Baltic States, Ukraine, Belarus, the Russian Federation as well as Western Africa.

A second MoC between the CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna) and the AEWA Secretariat is under preparation. Particularly the work of the so-called CBird working group (Circumpolar Seabird Group) is of interest for AEWA. It is foreseen that this MoC could be concluded in 2009.

2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Since the arrival of the Information Officer (JPO) in late 2005 and of the Information Assistant one year later, substantial progress has been made regarding the overall information management of the Secretariat.

However, Information Management is not only restricted to these two Officers, but has in fact grown to involve all Secretariat staff. Each staff member has a specific role in this respect and - through this collective effort - Information Management within the Secretariat has evolved into a team effort.

The Information Officer has to allocate 50 percent of his time to the WOW project where he is functioning as Communication Officer and the remaining time is earmarked for AEWA activities.

Thus, the time that the Information Officer can actually spend on purely AEWA Secretariat issues is very limited and, in reality, not sufficient to deal with the wide spectrum of information management properly. To compensate for this, it was decided to divide some of the tasks among other team members.

The following is an overview of information management activities since TC8 in March 2008:

Newsletter/ E-news

The Electronic Newsletter, recommended in the Communication Strategy, has been sent out at regular two-monthly intervals. The aim of the AEWA E-Newsletter is to provide readers with a regular and short digest of selective news coming from the AEWA Secretariat. Currently the E-Newsletter is sent out to over 2,500 people and new subscribers are joining via an online registration system on a weekly basis. The E-Newsletter has evolved into one of the main communication tools available to the Secretariat and its production always involves the entire Secretariat team.

Unfortunately, due to lack of capacity, the Secretariat was not able to publish the regular AEWA Newsletter as often as planned. The 11th AEWA Newsletter was published in 2008 and the Secretariat now has both the capacity and tools in place for a regular production of this print resource in future.

Websites

AEWA website (www.unep-aewa.org)

Since MOP3 good progress has been made in regularly updating the AEWA website. Currently the news section is being updated at least once a week and the usage statistics show that the AEWA news page is one of the most visited resources on the AEWA website. In addition resources like the AEWA Conservation Guidelines have been made more easily accessible to visitors. Furthermore, a new interactive and password-protected area for members of the Technical Committee was launched in early 2009. This new “TC Workspace”, developed by the Information Officer and customized by the Technical Officer is a communication platform meant to facilitate and enhance the exchange of information between TC members. The TC Workspace was ready in time to enable productive communication within the Working Groups and amongst all TC members, experts and observers in preparation for TC9.

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) website (www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)

The centre of the annual WMBD campaign is the WMBD website. Since 2006, the AEWA Secretariat has taken the lead in developing this online resource. Each year a small team of interns, working under the supervision of the AEWA Information Officer, helped to develop and customize the WMBD website to fit the annually selected theme. The theme for 2009 is: ‘*Barriers to migration*’.

AIWEb - website (www.aiweb.info)

In 2006 a designated website for the International Task Force on Avian Influenza was designed and developed by the AEWA Information Officer in close collaboration with the Internet Division at UNEP/DCPI. Currently the website is maintained by CMS, with the support of the Information Officer.

Wings Over Wetlands website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org)

In his capacity as Communication Officer for the Wings over Wetlands Project, the AEWA Information Officer has also been assigned with the development of a standalone website for the WOW project. This website is also up-dated with the latest information on a regular basis.

AFRING website (www.afring.org)

The AEWA Information Officer developed a designated website for the African Waterbird Ringing Scheme (AFRING). Meanwhile the website has been handed over to Mr Doug Harebottle at the (ADU), who will maintain it in future.

Posters

In 2008 and 2009 customized World Migratory Bird Day posters were designed and printed by the Secretariat. AEWA Flyway Posters on the Sociable Lapwing and the Madagascar Pond Heron were printed and distributed at MOP4.

AEWA Exhibition Stand

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

World Migratory Bird Day 2008 and 2009

After the launch of World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) in 2006 the event has quickly gained international momentum and acceptance. WMBD 2008 was celebrated on 10-11 May and the theme was: ‘*Migratory Birds - Ambassadors for Biodiversity*’. The main event took place in the run-up to the CBD COP in Bonn. For 2009 the WMBD will take place on 9-10 May and the theme will be ‘*Barriers to migration*’. This theme will focus on the man-made barriers that can be detrimental to birds. WMBD is a common CMS-AEWA activity; however AEWA has the lead in the development of the WMBD website and the overall coordination of WMBD outreach activities.

Technical Series

Technical Series No. 36 *International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Lesser-White fronted Goose (Anser erythropus)* was adopted by MOP 4 and printed in early 2009. It is available in English and Russian.

Other publications

The World Migratory Bird Day Calendar

This calendar was designed and layouted by the Secretariat and is illustrated by the top twelve nominated paintings from the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2007 Children's Painting Competition. The theme of WMBD 2007 was 'Migratory birds in a changing climate'.

Migratory Waterbirds and Climate Change

The first of a planned series of popular brochures, this publication, which is available in English and French, is a summary of the BTO report *The Effects of Climate Change on Migratory Waterbirds within the African-Eurasian Flyway* (2008). The full report will be published under the AEWA Technical Series.

Development of an online National Reporting System

With the financial support of Norway, UNEP contracted UNEP-WCMC to work on strengthening the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions through the strategic use of information/knowledge management among UNEP administered MEAs. One of the expected outcomes will be a portal, which will provide easy access to strategic documents of all participating MEAs and focal point information for e.g. CBD, CMS, Ramsar and/ or AEWA in a specific country. We also expect that the portal will make it possible to enquire which resolution/ decision under which MEA has been taken in relation to a specific issue (e.g. invasive species). In addition to the portal, it was also agreed that online reporting systems would be developed for some of the MEAs. The AEWA Secretariat has been involved in this project from the very beginning and was able to convince UNEP that the project proposal would also include the development of an online system for National Reports for CMS and AEWA. The AEWA Secretariat has been working very closely with UNEP-WCMC, which is responsible for implementing the project for UNEP. The development of this system is well underway and was presented to MOP4 and adopted.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

Contracting Parties are responsible and involved in the implementation of and compliance with the provision laid down in the Agreement. Their National Reports provide the necessary information to enable an assessment on progress made in this respect. However, the Agreement Secretariat is partly responsible and also involved in the implementation and/ or compliance of the Agreement. Hereafter you will find information on the role of the Secretariat, in particular of the Technical Officer, in this respect.

International Implementation Priorities/Tasks

In document TC 9.7 you will find detailed information on the current status of the implementation of the IIT 2009 – 2016. As already mentioned above, a total amount of € 5.2 million was needed for the full implementation of AEWA's IIP 2006-2008. To date approximately only 10 percent has been secured. Nevertheless taking into account the limited means available, good progress has been made in the implementation of the IIP. From the 36 listed IIP projects, the Secretariat contracted out 8 projects which have been implemented or are currently being implemented. Fifteen additional projects are directly linked to the WOW project and some of these projects are currently being implemented by WOW. This means that if we manage to secure the last missing € 600 K for the WOW project all these 15 IIP projects planned to be implemented by WOW could actually be realized. These 15 IIP projects together with the 8 IIP projects already contracted out by the Secretariat would make a total of 23 implemented projects, which corresponds to 64 percent of the IIP. To date no funds could be secured for the remaining 13 projects.

MOP4 reviewed the progress made regarding IIP 2006-2008 and adopted the International Implementation Tasks 2009-2016 through Resolution 4.10. The IIT 2009-2016 include 31 projects, some of which were not implemented in the previous period.

Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project

By the end of 2010 the WOW Project will come to a close. Meanwhile a first brainstorming session took place on 10-11 March 2009 to discuss 'Life after WOW'. One of the main questions is how the achievements of the WOW project could be sustained after the project comes to a close.

The current shortfall of € 600,000 is still a great concern and if not solved in the foreseeable future, it will have a serious impact on the implementation of the project.

The Project Coordinator Mr. Edoardo Zandri left the project Coordination Unit (PCU) to take up a new assignment at the UNEP/ GEF in Nairobi. With this move, the PCU will be run by Mr. Camillo Ponzani as from March 2009. The Steering Committee agreed to the re-location of the PCU to the premises of the AEWa Secretariat in Bonn, Germany as of mid 2009.

In general it could be stated that good progress has been made in the implementation of WOW, taking into account that some parts could not or only partially be implemented. WOW is seen to be a model for future work elsewhere on the globe and according to the latest information UNEP/ GEF would be in favour to develop a similar flyway project for other regions.

Lesser White-fronted Goose

After lengthy discussions at MOP4 the International Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) was adopted. In 2008 the first meeting of the RECAP Working Group took place in Bonn and the Executive Secretary was elected as Chair. This Working Group deals with the re-introduction and captive breeding of the LWfG in Fennoscandia..

As of February 2008, Ms. Kirsten Martin (German) entered on duty as Coordinator. This post is funded by the Government of Norway. In early 2009 Kirsten stepped down from this position and we are currently recruiting a successor. It is hoped that in the years to come progress will be made to implement the Action Plan. The focus will be on the wild Russian population that migrates through Kazakhstan and is suffering from the hunting pressure in that area.

Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds

AEWA is one of the founding members of the Task Force on Avian Influenza (AI) and Wild Birds. This Task Force was established after the outbreak of AI in west Siberia in July 2005. The Task Force is led by CMS and the AEWa Secretariat is closely involved in it. Our Information Officer has helped to produce both the Nairobi Seminar CD-ROM & AIWEB – the designated website for the international Task Force. This website is currently being maintained by CMS.

Advisory missions and the Implementation Review Process

Implementation Review Process (IRP)

MOP4 agreed to establish an implementation review process through Resolution 4.6. The main reason for this decision is the concern of the Meeting of Parties regarding the lack of implementation of the Agreement, the increasing number of cases of waterbirds or sites that might get affected by human activities and findings e.g. regarding the conservation status of species covered by AEWa. It has been decided that the Standing Committee will undertake this process. This is a great step forward for AEWa and allows the Standing Committee and the Secretariat to make on-the-spot assessment of the impact of activities on waterbirds, or on their sites and habitats.

The following cases are still pending:

Lake Natron in Tanzania

The Secretariat, in close cooperation with CMS, played an active role in the discussion of the plans of the Government of Tanzania, under a joint venture with TATA, to develop a soda ash extraction facility near Lake Natron. The Secretariat participated in the Ramsar Advisory Mission, also on behalf of CMS, to discuss

the possible negative effect that these developments might have on the breeding colony of the Lesser Flamingo with all the stakeholders involved. Lake Natron is the only breeding site for the Lesser Flamingo in East Africa.

Tana Delta in Kenya

A new problem is emerging in the Tana River Delta in Kenya. The plan is to use 20,000 hectares of wetlands located along this delta for sugar cane plantation, for the production of bio-fuels. The Secretariat is following these developments and is making every effort to collect more information about the exact plans.

International reviews

In accordance with paragraph 7.4 of the AEWA Action Plan, the Agreement Secretariat, in coordination with the Technical Committee and the Parties, shall prepare a series of international reviews necessary for the implementation of this Action Plan including:

- a) reports on the status and trends of populations;
- b) gaps in information from surveys;
- c) the networks of sites used by each population, including reviews of the protection status of each site as well as the management measures taken in each case;
- d) pertinent hunting and trade legislation in each country relating to the species listed in Annex 2 to this Agreement;
- e) the stage of preparation and implementation of single species action plans;
- f) re-establishment projects; and
- g) the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof.

Apart from these reviews, the Meeting of the Parties requested to review the experiences of those countries that have phased out, or are endeavouring to phase, the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands and to review the use of non-toxic shot for waterbird hunting at its second and third session through adoption of Resolution 2.2 and 3.11.

From the above list a, e, d, f and g were submitted to MOP4 and adopted. MOP4 also agreed to amend the AEWA Plan paragraph 7.5 which specifies that the Agreement Secretariat shall endeavour to ensure that the reviews mentioned in paragraph 7.4 are updated at intervals of not more than three years. Parties agreed to set different time frames for each review to avoid an overburden on the Secretariat and Parties for each MOP.

4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Since the Programme Officer entered on duty, on a temporary contract, our capacity to develop project proposals has improved significantly. Particularly foundations and agencies focusing on bilateral and multilateral development cooperation (e.g. national development cooperation agencies in Europe) have been contacted by AEWA with proposals for medium to large-scale projects. We are also collecting information about respective funding requirements and considering aspects such as the necessary terminology for project conceptualisation. We, as the AEWA Secretariat are still in a learning phase of closely linking our projects to the objectives of sustainable development and/ or poverty alleviation.

WetCap

The first project to be realized as a result of the activities of the Programme Officer is the project on strengthening waterbird and wetland conservation capacities in North Africa (WetCap). The total costs of implementing this three-year project are estimated to be € 1.6 million. The Spanish Developing Cooperation Agency (AECID) decided to support this project and a first grant of € 400,000 was received in 2008. It is expected that for years 2 and 3 a similar grant will be transferred to AEWA by AECID.

WetCap focuses on the North African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). The project proposal will primarily focus on capacity building regarding waterbird and wetland management. The project will build on WOW and is using the Training Modules developed under WOW, which after adaptation for North Africa, will be used for actual training in the region. There will also be some funds

available to cover the costs of surveys of wetland areas. The information resulting from these surveys will be fed into the International Waterbird Census (IWC).

The WetCap project was launched on 1 March 2009. The main partners in this project are BirdLife International and SEO, Wetlands International, Ramsar and AEWA.

African Initiative

A proposal was submitted to MOP4 to support the serial nomination of the Great Rift Valley as a World Heritage Site. This proposal led to a difficult discussion between representatives of Arab and African countries. From this discussion it became clear that the draft Resolution on the Great Rift Valley would not get full support from all the Contracting Parties. At the same time it became clear that African countries would like to see an initiative to support conservation work in their region. After several consultations with the respective stakeholders, whereby the idea evolved to strengthen waterbird and wetland capacity for the whole of Africa, the AEWA Secretariat took the lead in drafting the resolution on the African Initiative. The focus is on strengthening the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats in Africa. MOP4 agreed to allocate an amount of € 172,500 for the development of a Plan of Action and some small activities until 2012. The Meeting of Parties requested the Secretariat to submit a draft Plan of Action to MOP5 in 2012. In addition some countries promised to look into providing additional support to this initiative and particularly to the recruitment of an African Officer. So far no concrete commitments have been received but it is expected that some support might become available in 2010.