



HIGHLIGHTS FROM AEWA MOP-1 SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, 6-7 NOVEMBER 1999

On Saturday afternoon, delegates attended a joint opening ceremony for the first Meeting of the Parties (MOP-1) to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the sixth Conference of the Parties (COP-6) to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). On Sunday, delegates to the AEWA met throughout the day to address organizational matters, amendments to the Action Plan, institutional and financial arrangements and Conservation Guidelines. Working groups on financial and technical matters met in the evening.

AEWA MOP-1 AND CMS COP-6 OPENING CEREMONY

Pieter Botha (South Africa) welcomed delegates and recalled that 1999 marked the 20th anniversary of the CMS. He estimated the AEWA MOP-1 would draw 150 delegates from 80 countries and COP-6 would bring together 250 delegates from over 100 countries. He noted that the presence of many non-parties signaled growing interest in the CMS.

Mohammed Valli Moosa, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism of South Africa, overviewed the South African State of the Environment Report and highlighted agreements with neighboring countries, including Mozambique and Zimbabwe, to create trans-frontier wildlife protection parks.

Geke Faber, State Secretary for Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Netherlands, said AEWA implementation should help achieve sustainable development and serve as an example for species conservation. She called for close collaboration with UNEP, training and information programmes, joint implementation with the CMS and eventual expansion of the AEWA to include forestry and other fields.

Gila Altmann, Parliamentarian State Secretary, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, stressed the importance of sound research in formulating effective conservation strategies. She welcomed the AEWA Secretariat's possible relocation in Bonn and extended an invitation to host COP-7. She stressed that the CMS supplements, rather than duplicates, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and urged non-parties to join the CMS. Kas Hamman, Director of Environment, West Cape Province of South Africa, welcomed participants to the West Cape area and described its unique ecological aspects.

Speaking on behalf of NGOs, David Pritchard (BirdLife International) lauded the openness of the CMS process to NGO participation and highlighted the NGO's significant input to the CMS. He called for increased coordination between global conventions and for qualitative national reporting. He signaled NGOs' intent to question the lack of progress on some initiatives, and called for

timely, selective and appropriate resource allocation. The South African Post Office presented a series of CMS species stamps in recognition of the Convention.

Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive Director, identified the CMS as an aspect of biodiversity conservation and underscored the close linkages between cultural and biological diversity. He stressed the need for cultural solidarity to address global challenges and emphasized the need to link conservation of migratory species with overcoming poverty. Describing migratory species as travelers without passports, uninterested in ideological differences or borders, he stressed the need for transboundary cooperation for their conservation.

AEWA OPENING PLENARY

Arnulf Müller-Helmbricht, CMS Executive Secretary, opened AEWA MOP-1 and invited delegates to consider the provisional agenda (AEWA/MOP 1.1). He asked that welcome addresses be submitted in writing to the Secretariat. Gerard Boere, Secretary General of MOP-1, noting a full agenda and limited time, encouraged delegates to begin substantive work. Delegates adopted the agenda and the rules of procedure (AEWA/MOP 1.4). Mbareck Diop (Senegal) was elected MOP-1 Chair and F.H.J. von der Assen (the Netherlands) was elected Vice-Chair. Diop thanked delegates for his election, the Netherlands for the Interim Secretariat work, UNEP and the Bonn Convention.

The Plenary agreed to establish a Credentials Committee comprised of delegates from Germany, the Gambia, the Netherlands, Monaco and Tanzania. The Plenary adopted a resolution granting the following countries, which have met the requirements to become a Party but are awaiting finalization of the procedure, full participating status with the right to vote: Benin, Denmark, Finland, South Africa and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. FRANCE said it had signed but not ratified the Agreement. The Plenary also took note of ratifications of the Convention and the dates of entry into force for various Parties (AEWA/MOP 1.6).

Bert Lenten (AEWA Interim Secretariat) highlighted the work of the interim Secretariat, including promotion of the Agreement, preparations for MOP-1, funding of participation and gaining ratifications necessary to enable the Agreement to enter into force on 1 November 1999 (AEWA/MOP 1.5).

PLENARY

AMENDMENTS TO THE ACTION PLAN: Derek Scott (Wetlands International) detailed proposed amendments to the Action Plan (AEWA/MOP 1.7) which would expand it to include all 170 species under the AEWA and update the status of those species already covered. He noted amendments necessary to accommodate the proposed expansion, including reference to: conflict between fish-eating birds and human activities; and disturbances to colonial nesting birds from human recreation. He explained the methodology for determining conservation status

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within the Action Plan for the additional 111 species and noted that the Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA/Inf. 1.1) provides further details on the species' status. Noting increased knowledge on various populations, he said their conservation status within the Action Plan would need to be amended and said improved descriptions for some populations called for use of subdivisions.

FINLAND, on behalf of the EU, supported the amendments, subject to the provision of more detail on certain species, and noted the need to identify which species would be subject to hunting. The UK opposed a proposal to list subdivisions of the Red-breasted Merganser, noting a lack of sound supporting evidence. With regard to colonial nesting waterbirds, SWITZERLAND added reference to roosting. RWANDA asked how migratory birds in areas in conflict are classified. In response, Boere noted difficulty of reflecting this special circumstance in the Action Plan. The Federation of Fieldsports Associations of the EU (FACE) noted the AEWA states the use of lead shot for hunting should cease by the year 2000 and questioned the feasibility of this goal for many Range States. Delegates agreed to further discussion on the amendments to a working group.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS: On the establishment of a permanent AEWA Secretariat, GERMANY offered to circulate a letter detailing their offer and conditions for hosting the Secretariat. Müller-Helmbricht reviewed the revised Terms of Reference for the Secretariat Arrangement (AEWA/MOP 1.10) and stressed the importance of establishing administrative cohesion between CMS Agreement Secretariats.

Regarding establishment of the Technical Committee, Lenten outlined the proposed geographical division of the agreement area and rules of procedure for the AWEA Technical Committee (AEWA/MOP 1.11). He said five African and four European regions had been defined and noted that the Committee would be comprised of one expert from each of the nine regions as well as three independent and three NGOs experts. GERMANY, supported by MONACO and SWITZERLAND, suggested that an observer from each contracting Party receive a *de facto* invitation to all Committee meetings. Chair Diop requested delegates consider details in a working group.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: Lenten introduced the proposed 2000-2002 budget for the AEWA (AEWA/MOP 1.12) and drew attention to the draft table of budget estimates. MONACO supported including provision for voluntary contributions and for preparation of the MOP. NIGER called for including assistance for project implementation in the field and noted a potential need for more Secretariat staff. GERMANY remarked that the budget estimates overlooked the financial assistance offered by Germany, contingent on locating the Secretariat in Bonn, which includes 50,000 DM per year and payments for office equipment and interpretation. SWITZERLAND noted the draft budget does not consider cost reduction arising from synergies with other Conventions such as the Ramsar Convention. GUINEA said provision for ten participants to attend the Technical Committee was insufficient and further noted Spanish interpretation was not included. SENEGAL stressed the inclusion of assistance for developing country experts. FINLAND suggested including voluntary contributions and work in the field in the small conservation grants fund. In response to delegates' interventions, Lenten noted: the budget was prepared without knowledge of the German offer; voluntary contributions are difficult to estimate; projects in the field are not budgeted; and Spanish is not an official AEWA language. Boere said the budget would be revised in the working group to reflect the German proposal. He expressed his support for channeling implementation assistance directly rather than through the budget. ZIMBABWE called for provision for some secretarial representation in Africa.

Boere introduced the guidelines on financial contributions, including contributions in cash and in kind (AEWA/MOP 1.13). He proposed, and delegates agreed, that voluntary contributions and contributions in kind should be administered according to CMS financial guidelines. He feared that the acceptance of contributions in kind, in lieu of cash payment of obligatory contributions, might

set a dangerous precedent as such payment would be difficult to implement. Müller-Helmbricht remarked that only organizations, such as the IUCN, have made use of such contributions and considered the AEWA to be an inappropriate fora for such a funding modality. Noting some developing countries may need an alternative mechanism to pay their contributions, he suggested the issue be further considered in a working group. GERMANY requested that the guidelines be clarified. Underscoring that contributions are a MOP responsibility, he said the issue should not be delegated to the Secretariat.

Boere introduced a project with regard to a small grants fund. MONACO inquired about implementation of this project and questioned its management by UNEP. GERMANY said the AEWA Secretariat was too small to organize such a fund and supported administration by a separate entity. Boere suggested management by an independent international organization. NIGER and SENEGAL suggested the small conservation grants fund imitate Ramsar's integrated management system. SWITZERLAND noted accessing funds through UNEP might be cumbersome.

CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: Janine van Vessem (Wetlands International) introduced draft Conservation Guidelines developed by Wetlands International with support from the governments of Switzerland and the Netherlands (AEWA/MOP 1.8). She overviewed guidelines for: developing single-species action plans; identifying and tackling emergency situations; preparing site inventories; sustainably harvesting migratory species; regulating trade in migratory species; developing ecotourism in wetlands; addressing conflicts between waterbirds and human activities; and developing a waterbird monitoring protocol. She described the proposed guidelines as general enough to be applicable to all species and Range States and remarked that they should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the Technical Committee. The EU welcomed the guidelines but emphasized that Parties are not obligated to strictly abide by them. With regard to the guidelines on trade, he noted possible overlap and synergy with CITES. Noting that the Ramsar agreement refers to "zones" and that the proposed guidelines refer to "sites," SWITZERLAND noted the need for compatibility with Ramsar. He also pointed to possible synergies with Ramsar.

WORKING GROUPS

The Plenary established two working groups: one on financial and administrative matters, chaired by F.H.J. von der Assen (the Netherlands); and the other on technical and biological matters chaired by David Stroud (United Kingdom). Both working groups convened in an evening session. The group on financial and administrative issues considered, *inter alia*, draft resolutions on establishment of the permanent Secretariat, financial and administrative matters, guidelines for contributions in cash and contributions in kind, establishment of a small conservation grants fund and establishment of the Technical Committee. It revised the proposed budget to accommodate the proposed German contributions and other amendments. The group on technical and biological matters addressed amendments to the Action Plan, including the phase-out date for lead shot, and changes to the draft Conservation Guidelines.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Despite some delegates intimating that relocating the Secretariat in Bonn may not be optimal for scientific and technical collaboration, many agreed that for practical reasons, such as administrative efficiencies and financial benefits, it appeared Bonn would "fly."

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

AEWA PLENARY: Plenary will reconvene at 9:30 am in the Grand Ballroom to discuss international implementation priorities, establishment of a registry of international AEWA projects and a draft management plan for the Brent Goose.

WORKING GROUPS: The working groups on financial and administrative and technical and biological matters will convene in the evening.