



AEWA MOP-2 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2002

Delegates met in Plenary to start discussion of the agenda of the second Meeting of the Parties (MOP-2) to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), which included organizational matters, the AEWA Action Plan, adoption of conservation guidelines, the African-Eurasian Flyway project, phasing out lead shot, implementation and register projects, and single species action plans. The Technical Working Group met in the afternoon to discuss proposed amendments to the Action Plan.

OPENING CEREMONY

Michael von Websky, Deputy Director-General, German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conversation and Nuclear Safety, welcomed delegates to the meeting. He stressed Germany's commitment to international efforts for nature protection and highlighted the German government's decision to earmark one million Euros for the African-Eurasian Flyway project.

AEWA Technical Committee Chair Yousoof Mungroo thanked the German Government for its continued commitment to AEWA. CMS Executive Secretary Müller-Helmbrecht recognized AEWA as the most important CMS Agreement and highlighted several AEWA-relevant CMS COP-7 outcomes, including resolutions on oil pollution, electrocution of migratory bird species, by-catch, and the CMS Information Management Plan (IMP). Robert Hepworth, on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, highlighted the joint CMS-AEWA conference as the first post-WSSD environmental meeting and stressed its important role in reducing biodiversity loss.

PLENARY

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: The Plenary appointed Michael von Websky (Germany) as Chair, and Mbareck Diop (Senegal) as Vice Chair.

The Plenary adopted the meeting's list of documents (AEWA/MOP 2.1), provisional annotated agenda (AEWA/MOP 2.2 (Rev.1)) and provisional schedule (AEWA/MOP 2.4 (Rev.1)).

The Plenary appointed Alfousseyni Semega (Mali) as Chair of the Credentials Committee, with Richard Bagine (Kenya), Emmanuel Severre (Tanzania), Palle Jespen (Denmark) and Jan-Willem Sneep (Netherlands) as members.

Yousoof Mungroo (Mauritius) was appointed Technical Working Group Chair and Mbareck Diop (Senegal) as Administrative and Financial Working Group Chair.

Participants approved the admission of observers (AEWA/MOP 2.5), including 26 inter-governmental (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

OPENING STATEMENTS: NEPAL, TOGO, ALGERIA and GUINEA BISSAU assured Parties of their intention to participate in Agreement activities. UKRAINE, LEBANON and HUNGARY noted their recent AEWA ratifications, while CHAD and GHANA expressed hope to ratify by December 2002, NORWAY and UZBEKISTAN by 2003, and GABON and ESTONIA by MOP-3. COTE D'IVOIRE, IRELAND, ZIMBABWE, RWANDA, NIGERIA, ETHIOPIA and COMOROS also noted ongoing work toward accession.

REPORTS: Secretariat: Introducing the Secretariat's report for 2000-2002 (AEWA/MOP 2.6), AEWA Executive Secretary Bert Lenten highlighted: accrual of additional funds for implementation; International Implementation Priorities for 2000-2004 (IIP); development of the African-Eurasian Flyway GEF Project; and increased AEWA recognition.

Technical Committee: Technical Committee Chair Mungroo introduced the Committee's report (AEWA/MOP 2.7), drawing attention to: the Committee's work on the IIP; amendment to the action plan; guidelines on conservation and on acceptance of contributions; activities on phasing out lead shot in wetlands; establishment of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working Group; and drafting of the budget proposal for 2003-2005. He recommended establishing an AEWA Standing Committee.

Depositary: The NETHERLANDS said that there are 33 Parties to AWEA, of which 19 are from the Eurasian Region and 14 are from the African region. He noted that Israel would become the 34th Party in November 2002.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGREEMENT AND ACTION PLAN: Derek Scott (Wetlands International) introduced the draft report on Proposed Amendments to the Action Plan (AEWA/MOP 2.9). He noted that newly available information necessitates modifications in the conservation status of 36 populations.

REPORT ON THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN FLYWAY GEF PROJECT: Chris Baker (Wetlands International) noted the project's aim of improving the conservation status of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds. He listed Wetlands International and Birdlife International as the project's main executing agencies, and AWEA and the Ramsar Convention as supporters.

IMPLEMENTATION OF AEWA PRIORITIES: Ward Hagemeyer (Wetlands International) introduced documents on the IIP (AEWA/MOP 2.10 and 2.19), noting the allocation of funds for 12 out of the 33 activities for 2000-2004, and that 11 activities correspond to key GEF Flyway Project activities. He also noted 16 new activities in the 2003-2007 Implementation Plan. ZIMBABWE expressed concern regarding the perceived shift in GEF funding from biodiversity-related projects to poverty-alleviation ones.

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LEAD SHOT: Nienke Beintema (AEWA) introduced documents on phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands (AEWA/MOP 2.11 and AEWA/Res.2.2). She reported large-scale die-offs due to lead ingestion by waterbirds, but noted that some countries had successfully shifted to lead-shot alternatives. SENEGAL and DENMARK, on behalf of the EC, supported a resolution on phasing out lead shot. Noting its ban on lead shots by 2006, SWEDEN requested to be included on the list of countries phasing out lead shot. NORWAY said lead shot was also a pollution and animal welfare issue.

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION: Synthesis of Party Reports: Lenten noted that only ten countries submitted national reports, of which two are non-Parties. He said that due to time constraints, the Secretariat would synthesize the reports after the meeting.

Harmonization of National Reporting and Information Management: Christophe Zöckler (UNEP-WCMC) noted progress on harmonization of the information and reporting system (AEWA/CMS/Inf.7.2.18), highlighting the Harmonization Action Plan and the Species Information Database pilot project.

Cooperation with other Bodies: Lenten noted the Secretariat's cooperation with various Conventions and NGOs, highlighting the draft Ramsar and CMS/AWEA Joint Work Programme (AEWA/Inf.2.4 (Rev.1)) and collaboration with Wetlands International. Müller-Helmbrecht invited AEWA to endorse the CMS-CBD joint work programme. SWITZERLAND highlighted collaboration at regional level, especially with the European Council's Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.

ADOPTION OF CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: Tomme Young (IUCN Environmental Law Center) introduced the draft guideline on national legislation for migratory waterbirds conservation (AEWA/MOP 2.12). DENMARK drew attention to its proposal, noting the work of other international fora, particularly the CBD's invasive species activities, in the draft resolution on Conservation Guidelines (AEWA/Res.2.3).

INTERNATIONAL REGISTER OF PROJECTS: Lenten introduced a document on the Review of the Register of International Projects (AEWA/MOP 2.14), stressing the need to avoid duplication with other initiatives.

INTERNATIONAL SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS: Umberto Gallo-Orsi (Birdlife International) introduced the Sociable Plover (AEWA/MOP 2.15), Black-winged Pratincole (AEWA/MOP 2.18) and Great Snipe (AEWA/MOP 2.16) Action Plans, noting their vulnerable, data deficient and least endangered IUCN conservation status, respectively. On the Sociable Plover and Black-winged Pratincole, he stressed the need for, *inter alia*, surveys and monitoring schemes, national action and management plans, and awareness raising. On the Great Snipe, Gallo-Orsi said the Action Plan aims at keeping the species out of the IUCN red list, through, *inter alia*, establishing protected areas and regulating hunting. He also introduced the document on a Format for AEWA Species Action Plans (AEWA/MOP 2.20), recommending the use of internationally agreed standards and outlining proposed chapters on biological assessment, threats, and legislation implementation. Barwolt Ebbinggen (Alterra) introduced the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Action Plan (AEWA/MOP 2.17), highlighting measures proposed at the second meeting of the Dark-bellied Brent Working Group, including identification of sources of funding, and ensuring that the species' individuals are easily approachable. He noted that adoption of the Plan by AEWA would be premature until Range States accept it.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN-SOUTH ASIAN FLYWAY: Ward Hagemeyer (Wetlands International) noted the development of the Action Plan for the Central Asian-South Asian (formerly Indian) Flyway (AEWA/MOP 2.20) and the intention to finalize an instrument at a meeting scheduled for 2003. Lenten advocated the expansion of AWEA membership rather than creating a new instrument, if a binding instrument is opted for. The delegates agreed to defer the discussion on the matter until the 2003 meeting.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS: Headquarters Agreement and Juridical Personality: GERMANY outlined the recently signed Headquarters Agreement between the CMS Secretariat and the Government of Germany (AEWA/MOP 2.22) and, together with Lenten, invited the meeting to adopt it (AEWA/Res.2.11).

Standing Committee: Technical Committee Chair Mungroo reported on the Committee's recommendation to establish a 7-member Standing Committee (AEWA/MOP 2.23 and AWEA/Res.2.6). He also introduced the Technical Committee's proposal to amend its rules of procedures (AEWA/Res.2.5).

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Technical Working Group Chair Mungroo introduced proposed amendments to the AEWA Action Plan (AEWA/MOP 2.9). THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GAME AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT (CIC) stressed the need to focus on waterbirds rather than on raptors and other bird species. ZIMBABWE emphasized that wetlands-dependent species should be considered as waterbirds. SOUTH AFRICA proposed establishing a working group on the conservation of certain species of southern African coastal birds. The UK suggested that future AEWA MOPs be convened after Ramsar Convention meetings to allow Parties to obtain updated internationally-approved information on the conservation status of species. He also suggested reviewing the Action Plan to include sustainable use and site protection.

All issues, except the Central Asian-South Asian Flyway were forwarded to the Working Groups.

IN THE CORRIDORS

With a tight 3-day schedule, delegates dived right into the meeting's ambitious agenda. With most issues having been quickly touched upon, some delegates questioned the ability of the Technical Working Group to fully address all of the substantial issues. Several delegates who stayed on from the CMS expressed a sense of déjà vu of having to go through all the organizational matters and opening statements again, and feared that much of the momentum that prevailed at CMS COP-7 would be lost.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary is scheduled to convene at 9:30 am.

WORKING GROUPS: The Technical Working Group will meet to continue its deliberations on amendments to the Action Plan and address other matters. The Financial and Administrative Working Group will also meet.