

## AEWA MOP-4 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2008

Discussions continued today in plenary, under the chairmanship of Vice-Chair Abdoulaye N'Diaye (Senegal). Delegates addressed: the establishment of an International Review Panel; reports of the Technical and Standing Committees, the Depositary and the Secretariat; and the International Implementation Priorities 2006-2008.

They also discussed: the Wings over Wetlands project; the Communication Strategy; World Migratory Birds Day; the Draft Strategic Plan and enhanced national report format for online reporting; and financial and administrative matters.

In the early evening, working groups were established on technical matters and on financial and administrative matters. These working groups, however, met in a joint session throughout the evening, chaired by Vice-Chair N'Diaye. The joint session covered: the Draft Strategic Plan and enhanced national report format for online reporting; phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands; and hunting and trade legislation.

### PLENARY

AEWA Executive Secretary Bert Lenten announced the amended agenda (AEWA/MOP 4.3 Rev. 3), highlighting that the item on the Great Rift Valley had been changed to a discussion on wetland protection capacity building in Africa.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL REVIEW PANEL:** Executive Secretary Lenten introduced the draft resolution on the establishment of an International Review Panel (AEWA Res. 4.6), charged with providing assistance to countries for implementation activities. France, on behalf of the EU, supported the Secretariat's suggestion to allocate these tasks to the Standing Committee rather than to establish a new subsidiary body, and stressed the importance of cooperation with other conventions and agreements.

**REPORTS: Standing Committee:** Standing Committee Chair Erasmus Tarimo (Tanzania) presented the Committee's report (AEWA/MOP 4.13), which highlights its activities, such as a review of the implementation of Single Species Action Plans. He asked parties to consider bringing the costs for Standing and Technical Committee meetings back into the core budget.

**Technical Committee:** Technical Committee Chair Yousof Mungroo (Mauritius) introduced the Technical Committee report (AEWA/MOP 4.14). Discussion focused on funding restraints, especially regarding meeting financing, French translation, and national implementation.

**Depositary:** Gerard van Dijk (the Netherlands) presented the Depositary report (AEWA/MOP 4.15). He noted that, as of November 2008, there will be 62 ratifications, 10 of which have

occurred since MOP-3. He said 13 countries are in the process of accession, but gaps exist in the eastern part of the Agreement range.

**Secretariat:** Executive Secretary Lenten discussed the Secretariat's report (AEWA/MOP 4.16), outlining the Secretariat's institutional structure and various projects. Discussion focused on AEWA's role in avian influenza responses, as well as the need to pool resources among institutions.

**INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES:** Executive Secretary Lenten presented the report on the International Implementation Priorities 2006-2008 (AEWA/MOP 4.17). He stated that only eight of the 36 priorities had been fully funded, and only 680,000 of the necessary 5.2 million euros had been collected through voluntary donations. He asked for additional support.

In light of funding constraints, Executive Secretary Lenten cautioned against reducing the scope of priorities, and BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL suggested maintaining a wide range of projects, but highlighting priority projects to donors.

**AFRICAN-EURASIAN FLYWAYS GEF PROJECT:** Ward Hagemeyer, Wetlands International, reported on the implementation of the UNEP-Global Environment Facility (GEF) African-Eurasian Flyways Project (Wings over Wetlands) (AEWA/MOP Inf. 4.3). In the ensuing discussion, funding constraints were highlighted, with Executive Secretary Lenten stating that AEWA would not be able to secure partnership funding from UNEP and GEF in the future if it failed to follow through with current funding commitments for the Project. GERMANY suggested dedicating any remaining year-end finances to support the Project.

Delegates discussed the criteria used to select the demonstration project countries, continuity of activities after the project period, and means of sharing lessons learned. Hagemeyer highlighted region-specific training programmes and the development of online databases on critical site networks.

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:** Florian Keil, AEWA Secretariat, presented the report on the implementation of the Communication Strategy (AEWA/MOP 4.18), outlining activities on internal and external communication, capacity building and awareness raising. Stressing that implementation depends on voluntary funding, he highlighted financial constraints. Several African delegates noted language problems due to the deficit of French translations.

**WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY:** Keil presented on the launch of the World Migratory Bird Day in 2006 and its subsequent annual celebration. Discussion focused on the need to develop synergies with other conventions' related efforts, and for outreach to rural communities and children.

## DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN AND ENHANCED NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT FOR ONLINE REPORTING:

Sergey Dereliev, AEWa Secretariat, introduced the Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2017 (AEWA/MOP 4.19). He outlined the Plan's vision, overarching goals, objectives, and targets and indicators. Delegates discussed resource availability, coordination with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), potential incorporation of milestones into the Plan, and enforcement needs.

Dereliev then walked delegates through the online version of the enhanced national report format (AEWA/MOP 4.20), explaining the goal of coordination across MEAs. He said the Secretariat will aim to pre-populate the forms with existing data, and noted that multiple stakeholders can access and modify the forms prior to final submission. Delegates discussed the need for: development of compatible forms for countries without reliable internet access; rapid creation of tools for synthesizing the reports; complete translation of forms into French; and an instruction guide for using the online system.

### FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Executive Secretary Lenten discussed the income and expenditures for 2006-2008 (AEWA/MOP 4.21). Regarding expenditures, he noted that no shortfall is expected by the end of the triennium. On income, he said many payments remain outstanding, and noted that additional funding is needed, especially for implementation. Regarding the Draft Budget Proposal 2009-2012 (AEWA/MOP 4.22) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.8), Executive Secretary Lenten identified possible means for savings, including moving from a three- to a four-year MOP cycle, reducing the frequency of Standing Committee meetings, and conducting the Technical Committee meetings in English only.

In the ensuing discussion, NIGER emphasized that the official languages of AEWA are French and English. The AFRICAN UNION enquired how a four-year MOP cycle would affect the Agreement and financing. OMPO stated that deferring the MOP would be akin to putting the Agreement on the "back burner," and a representative of the Technical Committee cautioned against slowing down implementation. TANZANIA suggested that members who fail to make payments should not be eligible for funding. Executive Secretary Lenten emphasized that these measures can be avoided if states provide more funds.

### JOINT WORKING GROUP SESSION

#### DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2017 AND ENHANCED NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT FOR

**ONLINE REPORTING:** Regarding the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.7), delegates discussed how to reflect the option to move from a three- to a four-year MOP cycle. UNEP proposed an additional paragraph further requesting the donor community to support the strengthening of the online national reporting format by UNEP, the Secretariat and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. SWITZERLAND suggested text requesting the Technical Committee to elaborate milestones for achievement of the targets, while TANZANIA supported the current language. The Secretariat requested that the two parties collaborate to develop new wording.

Concerning the stated goal of the Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2017, the UK suggested that an additional paragraph be added referring to the role of AEWA in facilitating the improvement of national practices and international collaboration.

There was a lengthy discussion on the text outlining the Plan's objectives, with some delegates urging more efficient progress. The NETHERLANDS requested that reference to "comprehensive and coherent" flyway networks be included in the objective on undertaking conservation measures to improve or maintain conservation status. The UK, supported by the NETHERLANDS, proposed that enhancing resilience to climate change be reflected in the draft Strategic Plan. Regarding the objective on strengthening AEWA's facilitating role, discussion

on capacity building and institutional arrangements led to the creation of a small drafting group to propose new text. Executive Secretary Lenten clarified the objective on establishing linkages between AEWA and other biodiversity-related MEA national coordination mechanisms, providing the example of the Tanzanian national committee for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which has a subcommittee that focuses on AEWA.

There was some confusion about the Logical Framework Table, which includes the Plan's visions, goals and objectives, as well as indicators. The Secretariat agreed to review the Table to modify its structure. TANZANIA and the UK suggested focusing discussion on the indicators. These proved contentious. NIGER expressed doubt about whether several of the indicators were quantifiable, and also requested the addition of a column for activities. However, Executive Secretary Lenten explained that the Table is a common model across agreements, and suggested outlining activities in a work plan, rather than in the Strategic Plan, although he supported the call for clarifying the indicators. The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GAME AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION (CIC) suggested expanding the indicator for the target on phasing out the use of lead shot in wetlands, noting that legislation alone is not a sufficient indicator, and, with BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, requested that hunters be added as key actors. UGANDA commented that a target should be set for the phase-out of the manufacture, export and use of lead shot.

**PHASING OUT LEAD SHOT FOR HUNTING IN WETLANDS:** On the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.1), the EUROPEAN COMMISSION requested that language be added to urge parties that have not yet published timeframes for phasing out lead shot to endeavor to do so as soon as possible before 2012, or within four years of ratifying the Agreement. LIBERIA proposed leaving out reference to both "four years" and "as soon as possible," and Vice-Chair N'Diaye requested that the two parties develop common language.

After COMOROS requested clarification on a paragraph referring to the Implementation Review Panel's actions regarding parties that have yet to phase out lead shot, the Secretariat suggested, and delegates agreed, to delete the paragraph altogether.

**HUNTING AND TRADE LEGISLATION:** In the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.3), regarding a reference to sharing lessons learned from a European hunting bag data collection programme, delegates discussed ways to also highlight initiatives outside the EU.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates had come to know each other better over the previous night's buffet showcasing Malagasy specialties, participants were more vocal and willing to roll up their sleeves – and, in some cases, take off their jackets – to dive into the agenda.

Financial constraints were of high interest, with one delegate suggesting that AEWA needs to actively seek more funds instead of cutting MOPs, activities and personnel. Yet, despite strongly worded statements in plenary about unsatisfactory responses to francophone states' language concerns and the Secretariat's "problems with communication," the atmosphere in the halls was animated and positive.

Predictions for the week's outcomes remained uncertain, with one participant saying, "With all this talk on budgetary issues, it remains to be seen whether enough substantive progress will be achieved in Antananarivo to warrant the resources spent on convening this meeting."

Despite the fact that discussions concluded well after 9 pm, and stomachs were growling, the room was packed and delegates remained actively engaged throughout the evening.