

## AEWA MOP-4 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2008

MOP-4 Chair Tovondriaka Rakotobe (Madagascar) led the morning plenary session, which addressed: the development of new projects; draft International Implementation Priorities (IIPs) 2009-2012; proposals for amendments to the AEWA Annexes; new draft conservation guidelines; and climate change and migratory waterbirds. Plenary also discussed avian influenza, as well as the draft International Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) and their revised format.

In the afternoon, the working groups on technical matters and on financial and administrative matters continued discussions on their respective agenda items, chaired by Vice-Chairs Olivier Biber (Switzerland) and Abdoulaye N'Diaye (Senegal), respectively. Discussions on budget in the latter group continued until 10:30 pm, interrupted by a reception hosted by the French government.

### PLENARY

**REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROJECTS:** Catherine Lehmann, AEWA Secretariat, presented on the "WetCap" project, which aims to strengthen waterbird and wetland conservation capacity in Northern Africa (AEWA/MOP Inf. 4). Bert Lenten, AEWA Executive Secretary, presented on a project on capacity building for waterbird and wetland conservation in Africa, which replaced the initial agenda item on the possible serial nomination of the Great Rift Valley as a World Heritage Site (AEWA Res. 4.9). He said a new resolution would be drafted.

**DRAFT INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES 2009-2012:** Sergey Dereliev, AEWA Secretariat, presented the draft IIPs 2009-2012 (AEWA/MOP 4.23) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.10). He noted that many of the priorities are similar to those of the last triennium, because of a lack of implementation funds. Accordingly, he said only five new projects had been added. Delegates discussed how to prioritize the projects.

**PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGREEMENTS' ANNEXES:** Regarding the proposals to amend the AEWA Annexes (AEWA/MOP 4.24 and Inf. 4.2), and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.11), Dereliev described proposals by Mauritius, Italy, Croatia and Libya. The discussion focused on the Mauritian proposal, which requested that 20 new species of seabirds be added to the relevant Agreement Annex. MAURITIUS urged that the case of the dodo extinction not be repeated. The European Commission (EC), on

behalf of the EU, noted that seabird conservation would require coordination with regional fisheries management organizations. MADAGASCAR, GUINEA and NIGERIA supported the Mauritian proposal. NORWAY questioned the added value of these additions, given budgetary limitations. The AFRICAN UNION requested that food security issues be taken into account when adding species.

Dereliev presented the interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 (status of the populations of migratory waterbirds) of the AEWA Action Plan (AEWA/MOP 4.25) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.12), explaining that the Technical Committee had developed guidance and definitions of terms on two of the three criteria. Executive Secretary Lenten outlined the rationale for the draft resolution that proposes to allow the Standing Committee to forward amendment proposals to the MOP (AEWA Res. 4.13), noting that this would greatly facilitate the amendment procedure. Discussions on these two resolutions were referred to the afternoon working groups.

**NEW DRAFT CONSERVATION GUIDELINES:** Dereliev presented a document and draft resolution on guidelines concerning impacts of infrastructure development-related disturbance (AEWA/MOP 4.26 and AEWA Res. 4.14). The matter was referred to the afternoon working groups.

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS:** A report and guidelines on climate change and migratory waterbirds (AEWA/MOP 4.27) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.15) were summarized by Dereliev. He said 23 AEWA species are moderately to critically threatened by climate change impacts. FRANCE and MALI suggested that key data from the report be adapted for use in policy making and public outreach. Dereliev also presented the draft guidelines on measures needed to help waterbirds adapt to climate change (AEWA/MOP 4.28) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.14).

**LATEST INFORMATION ON AVIAN INFLUENZA:** Scott Newman, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), presented on the ongoing activities of the Convention on Migratory Species' Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds. David Stroud, United Kingdom, presented on the draft resolution on responding to the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), subtype H5N1 (AEWA Res 4.16). The AFRICAN UNION proposed that FAO set up supervisory committees in all African countries to support work on HPAI, and, with MAURITANIA and the EC, on behalf of the EU, noted the need for coordination among ministries.

**DRAFT INTERNATIONAL SSAPS:** Dereliev presented the seven individual International SSAPs (AEWA/MOP 4.29-35) and the revised SSAP format (AEWA/MOP 4.36). He urged parties to commit funds towards their implementation.

#### **FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORKING GROUP**

On the establishment of an Implementation Review Panel (AEWA Res. 4.6), delegates preferred to strengthen the Standing Committee rather than create a new subsidiary body tasked with implementation support. Executive Secretary Lenten agreed to re-draft the resolution accordingly, clarifying the proposed new tasks for the Committee.

Budget discussions on the draft resolution on financial and administrative matters (AEWA Res. 4.8) were protracted. The draft budget outlined various scenarios, where maintenance of current activities and staffing of the Secretariat would require a 15% increase in contributions from parties. FRANCE stressed it could only accept a budget that put French and English languages on equal footing, and MAURITANIA noted that French translation is critical for the participation of francophone African countries. The UK, with FINLAND and DENMARK, supported taking a 20% budget increase option as a starting point. TANZANIA, supported by NIGERIA, offered a “radical proposal” of increasing the minimum annual contribution of parties, which would provide additional funds without surpassing the 15% limit set by many parties’ governments. Lenten cautioned that this proposal could be counter-productive if it increased the budget on paper but led to shortfalls in payments. NIGERIA questioned whether increased funding would translate into projects on the ground, and urged limiting the administrative burden. The UK called on parties to bear in mind administrative implications when agreeing to resolutions. The AFRICAN UNION suggested linking AEWA with regional economic communities in Africa to enhance implementation. Lenten agreed to revise the draft so that it reflected the 15% budget option with added increases in translation and meeting travel support, as well as the proposal on the adjusted minimum contributions.

Lenten introduced the resolution on the African Initiative for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in Africa (AEWA Res. 4.9), which had replaced the Great Rift Valley proposal. He explained the replacement was a response to a request from African states to expand the conservation focus beyond a single geographic area. Discussions focused on the financial implications of the Initiative, with the UK, FRANCE, and the CZECH REPUBLIC asking that the estimated costs be reflected in the document and the budget, and Lenten clarifying that the Initiative would be funded through voluntary contributions. BELGIUM and the NETHERLANDS suggested adding text to encourage synergies with existing efforts in Africa.

On the IIPs 2009-2012 (AEWA Res. 4.10), WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL said the IIPs should strictly list international-level, and not national-level, actions for AEWA, stressing that the latter are the responsibility of states.

France, on behalf of the EU, supported by others, opposed the consideration of the Standing Committee as a “party” that can propose amendments to the Agreement’s Annexes (AEWA Res. 4.13). Delegates decided to dismiss the draft resolution.

A revised draft budget was discussed when delegates returned from the reception. The 15% option was taken as a baseline, with additional costs for interpretation and meeting travel cost support covered by funds from increased minimum annual contributions. Any surplus produced from these contributions would be invested into developing an action plan related to the draft African Initiative. After discussions, the Secretariat was asked to revise the draft a final time for consultations Thursday evening.

#### **TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP**

On improving knowledge of waterbird status and causes of decline (AEWA Res. 4.2), NORWAY requested that specific reference to mortality due to hunting be deleted, given other

anthropogenic threats, and delegates agreed to add reference to the monitoring of mortality causes. OMPO proposed language encouraging the establishment of ringing centers in Africa.

Delegates agreed on the following draft resolutions, with some minor amendments: international best practice for conservation through action planning and re-establishment (AEWA Res. 4.4); guidance for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan (AEWA Res. 4.12); and conservation guidelines (AEWA Res. 4.14).

Regarding introduced non-native waterbird species (AEWA Res. 4.5), France, on behalf of the EU, requested that text be added to refer to amateur rearing of ornamental waterfowl. The UK noted the importance of coordinating efforts between range states and contracting parties. Substantial discussion focused on how to reflect the role of ornithologists and their organizations in the monitoring and control of non-native waterbirds, and new draft text was proposed. Concerning the eradication of introduced ruddy duck populations, discussion focused on whether the Netherlands and France should be identified explicitly in the text, and delegates agreed to additional reference to all contracting parties and range states.

On amendments to the Agreement’s Annexes (AEWA Res. 4.11), delegates discussed redefining the geographical terms, and decided to invite the Technical Committee to modify the definitions. Delegates agreed to ask the Technical Committee to reflect on the implications of the language “threatened species” in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan, as it has come to also include near-threatened species.

On climate impacts to migratory waterbirds (AEWA Res. 4.15), France, on behalf of the EU, was invited to submit in writing its suggested additional language on considering impacts of adaptation projects, such as flood prevention works, on migratory waterbirds.

On avian influenza (AEWA Res. 4.16), the UK proposed two new paragraphs on collaboration with and among ministries, which were accepted.

Regarding the resolution on International SSAPs (AEWA Res. 4.17), DENMARK and GERMANY proposed corrections to descriptions of the Eurasian spoonbill populations in their respective countries. Delegates agreed on the SSAPs on the maccoa duck, Madagascar pond heron, white-winged flufftail, and lesser flamingo without substantive changes. Concerning the black-tailed godwit, OMPO urged emphasis on predator control. On the SSAP for the lesser white-fronted goose, France, on behalf of the EU, stated that the relevant range states had met in an effort to find a compromise, and a revised document would be circulated on Friday.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

In the technical working group, many were surprised by the group’s effortless review of such a large number of resolutions, which concluded just in time for the evening’s reception. However, one delegate noted this was only because the discussion on the lesser white-fronted goose – contentious because one of its populations is potentially derived from released captives – was deferred to Friday’s plenary. He said, “You’ll likely see agreement on Friday, but I’m not convinced everyone will be happy.”

The budget discussion, however, had spilled out of the working group and into the halls, which buzzed with heated debates, only to return to the conference room again after the reception. The mood had changed from charged to mellow, and one delegate said, “I know what we should put in the budget: wine.”

**ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** Since field trips were held all day on Thursday, this will be the last daily report from MOP-4. The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of MOP-4 will be available on Monday, 22 September 2008, online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/cms/aewa-mop4/>. A French translation of this document will be available shortly after that date.