

**SUMMARY OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN WATERBIRD AGREEMENT: 15-19 SEPTEMBER 2008**

The fourth Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement met from 15-19 September 2008, in Antananarivo, Madagascar. The meeting brought together around 160 participants, representing contracting parties, non-party range states, national and international non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental organizations.

Delegates discussed, among other things, the implementation of: the Agreement and Action Plan; the International Implementation Priorities 2006-2008; the Communication Strategy; and the African-Eurasian Flyways Global Environment Facility Project. They also addressed: phasing out lead shot in wetlands; establishment of an International Review Process; and International Reviews on various technical matters, including the conservation status of migratory waterbirds in the Agreement area and the status of introduced non-native waterbird species.

The agenda also included discussions on: Draft International Implementation Priorities 2009-2012; proposed amendments to the Annexes of the Agreement; avian influenza; climate change and migratory waterbirds; Draft International Single Species Action Plans; and Draft Conservation Guidelines.

The meeting, which adopted 20 resolutions, was conducted in plenary and in two working groups, on technical and scientific matters, and on financial and administrative matters. The two working groups met in a joint session on Tuesday, and separately on Wednesday and Thursday. Despite some contentious issues, such as the adoption of a new budget and a species action plan for the lesser white-fronted goose, discussions were characterized by a remarkably cordial atmosphere and agreement was reached to most participants' satisfaction.

Among the meeting's main achievements was the adoption of a budget that will allow the Secretariat to maintain its current level of staff and activities, with additional costs for interpretation and meeting travel cost support covered by funds from increased minimum annual contributions. Another achievement was the adoption of a resolution on an African Initiative for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their

Habitats in Africa, also funded – at least in part – out of the core budget, which illustrates the Agreement's increasing focus on Africa. In general, however, funds for implementation remain low, and the future effectiveness of the Agreement strongly depends on parties' willingness to increase their mandatory or voluntary financial contributions in the long term.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF AEWA

Migratory species are especially vulnerable to a wide range of threats, including habitat loss in breeding areas, excessive hunting along migration routes and degradation of feeding grounds. In the early 1960s, international conservation organizations began to draw attention to these problems and called for a convention on migratory species.

In response, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) was adopted in 1979 and entered into force in 1983. CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, recognizes that states must be the protectors of migratory species that live within or pass through their national jurisdictions. CMS aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their ranges, and currently has 109 parties.

The Convention was designed to allow for expansion and revision of commitments, and to provide a framework through which parties may act to conserve migratory species and their habitats. One of the mechanisms established by CMS is the development of specialized regional agreements for the conservation and management of migratory species that have an unfavorable conservation status or that would benefit significantly from international cooperation. At present, seven agreements and fourteen memoranda of understanding (MOUs) have been concluded in this regard. The largest of the agreements is the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, also known as the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).

At the first Conference of Parties (COP-1) to CMS, held in Bonn, Germany, in 1985, delegates decided to prepare an Agreement for the Western Palearctic Anatidae. Consequently, in 1988 the Government of the Netherlands started work on a draft Western Palearctic Waterfowl Agreement as part of its Western Palearctic Flyway conservation programme. During the drafting and consultation process, the name of the Agreement was changed into the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, emphasizing the importance of Africa for migratory birds.

The first consultative meeting of AEWA range states was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1994. In 1995, the final negotiation meeting was held in The Hague, the Netherlands. The meeting adopted the Agreement by consensus and accepted the offer of the Dutch Government to provide an Interim Secretariat. Opened for signature in 1996, the Agreement entered into force on 1 November 1999. Only a few days later, the first session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP-1) took place in Cape Town, South Africa. This meeting, among other achievements, established a Technical Committee and adopted Conservation Guidelines. In 2000, a permanent Secretariat was created, administered by UNEP and co-located with the CMS Secretariat in Bonn. The number of contracting parties currently stands at 62, constituting 24 African countries, 37 Eurasian countries and the European Community.

AEWA provides for coordinated and concerted action to be taken by the range states throughout the migration system of the waterbirds to which it applies. The Agreement has three annexes. Annex I outlines the Agreement's geographical area, which covers 118 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and parts

of Asia and Canada. Annex II lists the species of waterbirds to which the Agreement applies. The list includes 235 species of birds ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle, including many species of divers, grebes, pelicans, cormorants, herons, storks, rails, ibises, spoonbills, flamingos, ducks, swans, geese, cranes, waders, gulls, terns and the South African penguin. Annex III contains a comprehensive Action Plan, which describes actions to be undertaken in the areas of: species and habitat conservation, management of human activities, research and monitoring, education and information, and implementation. The Action Plan also contains a table (Table 1) on the status of populations of migratory waterbirds.

**AEWA MOP-2:** This meeting took place from 25-27 September 2002 in Bonn, Germany. MOP-2 established a Standing Committee and added 65 species to Annex II of the Agreement. It also adopted resolutions on, *inter alia*: phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands; draft conservation guidelines on national legislation and on introduced non-native waterbirds; International Implementation Priorities 2003-2007; International Single Species Action Plans; and the budget for 2003-2005.

**AEWA MOP-3:** This meeting was held from 23-27 October 2005 in Dakar, Senegal. Delegates adopted resolutions on, *inter alia*: avian influenza; climate change in relation to migratory waterbirds; guidelines for criteria used in Table 1 of the Action Plan; online reporting; an international partnership for support of waterbird population assessments; amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement; a Strategic Plan; a Communication Strategy; International Implementation Priorities 2006-2008; International Single Species Action Plans; and the budget for 2006-2008.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

The fourth Meeting of the Parties (MOP-4) to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement commenced on the morning of Monday, 15 September, with opening statements from Lydie Raharimaniraka, Ministry of the Environment, Forests and Tourism of Madagascar, and Bert Lenten, AEWA Executive Secretary, who noted that, of the 522 waterbird species for which data exist, 41% are in decline. Delegates viewed a video message from Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Harison Edmond Randriarimanana, Madagascar's Minister of Environment, Forests and Tourism, urged government coordination with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local communities and the private sector for enhancing the implementation of AEWA. At an evening gathering over dinner, hosted by the Government of Madagascar, Minister Randriarimanana gave an official opening address.

Delegates then adopted the rules of procedure (AEWA/MOP 4.2) with some amendments, including an option for electing more than one Vice-Chair. The meeting elected Tovondriaka Rakotobe (Madagascar) as Chair of the meeting, and Abdoulaye N'Diaye (Senegal) and Olivier Biber (Switzerland) as Vice-Chairs. France, Syria, and Nigeria, with Kenya as Chair, were elected to the Credentials Committee. Regarding the adoption of the agenda (AEWA/MOP 4.3 Rev.1), Egypt suggested deleting the item on nominating the Great Rift Valley as a World Heritage Site. Kenya asked for clarification and further consultation. Chair Rakotobe suggested, and delegates agreed, to defer discussion

on this issue to allow for further consultation. Some minor amendments were also suggested. The agenda was adopted with these changes. Delegates admitted the observers listed in document AEWA/MOP 4.4, as well as Côte d'Ivoire.

The following non-contracting parties then reported on progress towards accession to the Agreement: Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia, Swaziland and Zambia. Identifying inhibiting factors in this regard, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire noted political instability, and Ethiopia cited new institutional arrangements. France, on behalf of the European Union (EU), pledged EU member states' commitment to the Agreement. The African Union (AU) outlined relevant ongoing activities in the region.

#### **AEWA AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY**

On Monday, Sergey Dereliev, AEWA Secretariat, introduced the AEWA Awards. He said they had been established by the Standing Committee (StC) in 2005, and are presented at each MOP to recognize institutions and individuals within the Agreement area that have significantly contributed to the conservation and sustainable use of waterbirds.

The winner in the individual category was Mark Anderson (South Africa), in recognition of his long-standing involvement in waterbird conservation, particularly relating to South Africa's lesser flamingo. In the institutional category, Guy-Noël Olivier (France) received the award on behalf of Oiseaux Migrateurs du Paléarctique Occidental (OMPO), which had been recognized for its role in increasing AEWA membership, assistance in scientific research, and support of the Agreement's implementation.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT AND ACTION PLAN**

On Monday, Sergey Dereliev, AEWA Secretariat, introduced the synthesis report based on the information contained in the national reports submitted over the past triennium (AEWA/MOP 4.5), noting that only 50% of African parties had submitted their national reports. He highlighted future priorities, including implementing and drafting site management plans, bolstering enforcement and implementation, and addressing governance gaps.

#### **PHASING OUT LEAD SHOT FOR HUNTING IN WETLANDS**

On Monday, Catherine Lehmann, AEWA Secretariat, introduced the synthesis of national reports on phasing out lead shot (AEWA/MOP 4.6), and the related progress report (AEWA/MOP 4.7 Rev.1) and draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.1 Rev.1). She said only 18% of range states have fully phased out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands, and relevant legislation is lacking in 60% of range states, including all of the African range states.

Lehmann highlighted recommendations for national-level measures on legislation, awareness raising, education for hunters, and improved availability of lead-free shot. Regarding international-level actions, she recommended increasing efforts

with regard to regional workshops and the dissemination of existing information, and announced the production of a popular brochure showcasing experiences in those countries that already have legislation in place. BirdLife International and Executive Secretary Bert Lenten stressed that education materials are amply available, and identified a problem with their effective dissemination.

In the joint working group session on Tuesday, delegates discussed the draft resolution, and decided not to include a timeframe for the phasing out of lead shot, leaving only the phrase "as soon as possible."

In Friday's plenary, delegates discussed the revised draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.1 Rev. 2). The European Commission (EC), on behalf of the EU, requested that the reference to 30 September 2009 as a date to report back to the Secretariat on progress made on phasing out lead shot, be returned to the text. The draft resolution was adopted with this amendment.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.1 Rev. 2), the MOP, *inter alia*, urges contracting parties to phase out the use of lead shot in wetlands as soon as possible, and calls upon contracting parties to continue to report to each session of the MOP on progress made and to specify how they plan to overcome any problems encountered. The MOP strongly urges contracting parties, which have not yet phased out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands, to publish self-imposed timetables for completing the phase out as soon as possible, and to inform the Secretariat accordingly by 30 September 2009. The resolution also contains provisions on: enforcement measures; information sharing; cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); knowledge dissemination; education and training for hunters; promotion of non-toxic shot by ammunition manufacturers; and Secretariat support, especially for developing countries. The resolution also invites financial support for all of these activities, and requests the Technical Committee to examine any potential problems for AEWA species arising from the use of lead shot in terrestrial ecosystems and from the use of lead fishing weights.

#### **INTERNATIONAL REVIEWS**

**CONSERVATION STATUS:** The review of conservation status of migratory waterbirds in the Agreement area (AEWA/MOP 4.8) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.2) were introduced in plenary on Monday. Sergey Dereliev, AEWA Secretariat, presented the relevant documents. He emphasized the shift from a descriptive to an analytical approach, referring to the addition of IUCN Red List data for AEWA species and an analysis of waterbird population trends in Europe. He called for: increased quality and quantity of monitoring, surveillance and international coordination; sophisticated analysis of census and ringing data; and more research into the causes of both population increases and decreases. Executive Secretary Bert Lenten announced the Secretariat's intention to publish a brochure by the end of the year that will outline the ten key messages of the report. Wetlands International raised concern over the limited funding available for the International Waterbird Census, cautioning that this financial deficit negatively impacts the effectiveness of the Agreement.

In the technical and scientific working group's discussions on Wednesday, delegates agreed to Norway's request to delete specific reference to mortality due to hunting, given other anthropogenic threats. Delegates also agreed to add reference to the monitoring of mortality causes. OMPO proposed language encouraging the establishment of ringing centers in Africa.

During Friday morning's plenary, delegates adopted the draft resolution responding to the need to improve knowledge of the status of and factors causing declines of some waterbird populations (AEWA Res. 4.2 Rev. 1) without amendment.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.2 Rev. 1), the MOP, *inter alia*:

- urges contracting parties and other range states to initiate monitoring programmes involving regular site visits, and to submit data to Wetland International's International Waterbird Census databases or World Bird Databases of BirdLife International;
- strongly encourages monitoring of wetlands in poorly known parts of the Agreement area that could be suitable for waterbirds;
- encourages the development of comprehensive monitoring at key sites in other stages of waterbirds' annual cycles;
- encourages the monitoring of waterbirds that are poorly covered by standard censuses;
- calls upon contracting parties and other range states to support the establishment of monitoring productivity, mortality, and mortality causes, and encourages them to increase support for appropriate marking and telemetry studies;
- requests Wetlands International and its waterbird Specialist Groups, in consultation with the IUCN Species Survival Commission, to continue to assess the limits of biogeographical populations of migratory waterbirds;
- calls upon contracting parties and donor organizations to help provide necessary financial means to facilitate the related tasks;
- requests the Secretariat to commission a review of available scientific evidence for the causes of waterbird population changes and identify priority areas for further research; and
- calls upon contracting parties with well-developed and operational programmes of monitoring and research to share their experiences and provide financial support for capacity building.

**HUNTING AND TRADE LEGISLATION:** On Monday, Catherine Lehmann, AEWA Secretariat, presented the report (AEWA/MOP 4.9), which summarizes a survey of range states' legislation pertaining to hunting and trade, and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.3), in Monday's plenary. She highlighted recommendations to enhance implementation of the Agreement, including: training workshops on the subject; stronger enforcement measures; clarity of provisions; and focus on knowledge gaps. In the joint working group session on Tuesday, regarding a reference in the draft resolution to sharing lessons learned from a European hunting bag data collection programme, delegates discussed ways to also highlight initiatives outside the EU. During Friday morning's plenary, delegates adopted the draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.3 Rev. 2) without amendment.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.3 Rev. 2), the MOP, among other things:

- urges all parties to fully implement AEWA Action Plan's paragraph 2.1 (legal measures), and 4.1 (hunting) and to prohibit trade in birds of populations that have been taken in contravention of AEWA provisions concerning the taking of birds;
- urges parties to promote the membership of hunters to hunting organizations and to enhance or establish cooperation with hunting organizations;
- recommends parties to develop innovative ways of linking appropriate income to the management and conservation of migratory waterbirds;
- directs the Secretariat to facilitate training and technical assistance in order to enhance the implementation and enforcement on hunting and trade requirements;
- invites the support of the implementation of International Implementation Priority (IIP) projects related to hunting and trade;
- instructs the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Technical Committee, to update the relevant conservation guidelines on sustainable harvest and on regulating trade;
- instructs the Secretariat to seek cooperation with the bodies in charge of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds in order to avoid contradiction;
- requests the Technical Committee to review and provide guidance on the interpretation and implications of the Action Plan, as specified in Annex 1 to the resolution;
- invites the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation in the EU (FACE) and other involved organizations to share their experiences involved in hunting bag data collection; and
- decides that the recommendations made in the review on hunting and trade legislation (AEWA/MOP 4.9) shall be addressed before MOP-7.

**RE-ESTABLISHMENT PROJECTS:** The review of waterbird re-establishment projects (AEWA/MOP 4.11) and related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.4) were first introduced in plenary on Monday. Sergey Dereliev described a database for information pertaining to waterbird re-establishment in the AEWA region, an assessment of re-establishment projects according to IUCN guidelines, and progress on project implementation. Among recommended actions, he cited the development of advisory groups for re-establishment projects, conduct of comprehensive feasibility studies, strict adherence to IUCN guidelines, secured financial and political support, sufficient habitat for projects, and a standard set of evaluation criteria.

In the technical and scientific working group, delegates agreed on the draft resolution on developing international best practice for the conservation of threatened waterbirds through action planning and re-establishment (AEWA Res. 4.4), with some minor amendments. During Friday morning's plenary, delegates adopted the draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.4 Rev. 1), as well as its appendices, without amendment.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.4 Rev. 1), the MOP, *inter alia*:

- urges contracting parties and intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations to follow IUCN's Guidelines for Re-introductions;
- requests the Technical Committee to develop supplementary guidance for re-establishment of waterbirds, develop a reporting structure, and provide access to the AEWA re-establishment database via the internet;
- urges AEWA National Focal Points to maintain a national register of re-establishment projects;
- requests the Technical Committee to work with other international parties to continue to harmonize collective approaches to information collection;
- instructs the Secretariat to seek funds for the development and implementation of Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) for African and Asian species;
- urges contracting parties to provide resources for the further development and implementation of SSAPs.
- instructs the Secretariat to note and respond to recommendations concerning the need to update or revise SSAPs for the slender-billed curlew, red-breasted goose, and marbled teal, and to report on their progress at MOP-5;
- endorses the priority list for elaboration of new SSAPs as presented in AEWA/MOP 4.10 (review of the state of preparation and implementation of SSAPs) and recommends that this list be used for future SSAP development;
- approves the revised format for SSAPs as presented in AEWA/MOP 4.36 (revised format for SSAPs) and invites international bodies to use it for future SSAP development; and
- encourages the contracting parties and other range states to implement SSAPs more actively and provide funding for the coordination of their implementation.

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS:** Sergey Dereliev presented the report on the stage of preparation and implementation of SSAPs (AEWA/MOP 4.10) on Monday. He described population trends for the 15 AEWA species for which there are SSAPs, and outlined factors that have influenced the rate of SSAP implementation, including: relevant regional legislation, the availability of funding mechanisms, species distribution, and cooperation between governments and NGOs. Morocco emphasized its development of a national action plan for the northern bald ibis. OMPO called for the incorporation of ringing data analyses and genetic information into action plans.

**NON-NATIVE SPECIES:** The report on the status of introduced non-native waterbird species (AEWA/MOP 4.12) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.5) were introduced in plenary on Monday. Sergey Dereliev introduced the report and draft resolution, noting that breeding of introduced species and hybridization are significant and increasing, a trend that negatively impacts species and habitats. He outlined recommendations such as: strengthening, improving and enforcing legislation; including introduced species in monitoring schemes; and supporting research on the effects of introduced

waterbirds. He also called for coordination on eradication and control schemes, and said AEWA should consider developing action plans on introduced species.

In the technical and scientific working group on Wednesday, the EU requested that text be added to refer to amateur rearing of ornamental waterfowl. The UK noted the importance of coordinating efforts between contracting parties and other range states. 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 add reference to all contracting parties and range states.

During Friday morning's plenary, delegates considered the revised draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.5 Rev. 1), with the EU requesting that the text urging France to undertake urgent measures to contain and eradicate the sacred ibis include additional reference to any other party in which the species is developing as a non-native species. Germany requested that reference to ensuring "maintenance of aviaries or pens, and zoos to prevent escapes, and to considering marking, e.g. by ringing, all captive waterbirds" be deleted from the text, arguing that these activities could be burdensome. With these amendments, and a few other few minor text changes, delegates adopted the resolution.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.5 Rev. 1), the MOP, among other things:

- calls on contracting parties and other range states to strengthen precautionary measures and to enforce and improve related national legislation as appropriate;
- invites ornithological organizations to encourage waterbird counters to include non-native and hybrid waterbirds in censuses and monitoring schemes; and
- requests that the Secretariat explore means of promoting research on the effects of non-native waterbirds on native waterbirds, identify the feasibility of control schemes, and define priorities for action.

Contracting parties and other range states are:

- called upon to implement better regulation of introduced non-native populations or native waterbird species;
- requested to coordinate their efforts to control and eradicate non-native species;
- requested to prohibit or introduce more stringent regulations for keeping and trading of certain species that pose risks to native biodiversity; and
- invited to allocate appropriate resources for research, monitoring and capacity building related to non-native waterbirds.

The MOP also:

- invites hunters, ornithologists and their organizations to assist in national monitoring and control of non-native waterbird species;
- requests contracting parties to better record and monitor avicultural collections;
- invites zoos and other institutions to consider education and public awareness activities on non-native waterbird species;

- encourages the use of the AEWG Guidelines on Avoidance of Introductions of Non-Native Waterbird Species; and
- encourages the continuation, establishment, or stepping up of eradication measures of the ruddy duck, as well as eradication and containment measures of the sacred ibis in relevant countries.

#### **ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL REVIEW PANEL**

A draft resolution on the establishment of an Implementation Review Panel (IRP) (AEWA Res. 4.6) was introduced in plenary on Tuesday by Executive Secretary Bert Lenten, who noted that the IRP would be tasked with providing assistance to countries for implementation activities. In the financial and administrative working group on Wednesday, delegates opted to re-name the proposal as a “Process,” not “Panel,” and to allocate the tasks of the IRP to the StC, rather than to establish a new subsidiary body. Executive Secretary Lenten agreed to re-draft the resolution accordingly.

During Friday morning’s plenary, delegates adopted the draft resolution without amendment.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.6 Rev. 1), the MOP, *inter alia*: establishes a specific process, to be undertaken by the StC, to assist in Agreement implementation; outlines the associated required activities of the StC in this capacity; instructs the Secretariat to support the StC, resources permitting; and requests that the StC work in cooperation with relevant agreements to avoid duplication of efforts.

#### **REPORTS**

The following reports were discussed in plenary on Tuesday.

**STANDING COMMITTEE:** StC Chair Erasmus Tarimo (Tanzania) presented the report of the StC (AEWA/MOP 4.13), outlining activities, including a review of the implementation of SSAPs, and asked parties to consider bringing the costs for Standing and Technical Committee meetings back into the core budget.

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE:** Yousoof Mungroo (Mauritius), Technical Committee Chair, presented the Committee’s report (AEWA/MOP 4.14). The ensuing discussions centered on funding constraints, especially regarding meeting financing, French translation, and national implementation.

**DEPOSITARY:** Gerard van Dijk (Netherlands) presented the Depositary report (AEWA/MOP 4.15), noting that 10 ratifications had occurred since MOP-3, bringing the total number of contracting parties to 62.

**SECRETARIAT:** Discussions on the Secretariat’s report (AEWA/MOP 4.16), presented by Executive Secretary Bert Lenten, focused on AEWG’s role in avian influenza responses, and on the need to pool resources among institutions.

#### **INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES 2006-2008**

Executive Secretary Bert Lenten presented the report on the IIPs 2006-2008 (AEWA/MOP 4.17) to plenary on Tuesday. Calling for additional support, 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.

#### **AFRICAN-EURASIAN FLYWAYS GEF PROJECT**

In plenary on Tuesday, 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), highlighting the development of region-specific training programmes and an online database of critical site networks. In the ensuing discussion, delegates considered: funding constraints; criteria used to select the demonstration project countries; continuity of activities after the project period; and means of sharing lessons learned. A side event on the “Wings over Wetlands” project and its critical site network was held on Friday.

#### **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

On Tuesday, Florian Keil, AEWG Secretariat, presented the report on the implementation of the Communication Strategy (AEWA/MOP 4.18) to plenary, 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**

In Tuesday’s plenary, Florian Keil, AEWG Secretariat, 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 2009-2017 AND ENHANCED NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT FOR ONLINE REPORTING**

In the opening session on Monday, Executive Secretary Bert Lenten called for the adoption of the AEWG Strategic Plan 2009-2017 (AEWA/MOP 4.19) and the commitment of resources for its implementation. The Draft Strategic Plan and enhanced national report format (AEWA/MOP 4.20) were discussed in plenary and in the joint working group session on Tuesday. This joint working group considered the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.7), which was adopted in plenary on Friday.

On Tuesday, in plenary, Sergey Dereliev introduced the Strategic Plan and outlined its vision, overarching goals, objectives, and targets and indicators. Delegates discussed resource availability, coordination with other MEAs, potential incorporation of milestones into the Plan, and enforcement needs.

Dereliev also presented the enhanced national report format, 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.

The joint working group considered how to reflect the option to move from a three- to a four-year MOP cycle in the draft resolution. There was lengthy discussion on text outlining the Plan's objectives. Concerning the stated goal of the Strategic Plan, 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. 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. Following their opposing interventions related to milestones for the achievement of targets, Switzerland and Tanzania were asked to collaborate to develop new wording. The UK, supported by the Netherlands, proposed that enhancing resilience to climate change be reflected in the draft Strategic Plan.

Confusion about the Logical Framework Table, which includes the Plan's visions, goals, objectives, and indicators, resulted in the Secretariat agreeing to modify the Table's structure. Several delegates called for clarification of the indicators. On the target of phasing out lead shot, the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) noted that legislation alone is not a sufficient indicator of progress, and, with BirdLife International, requested that hunters be added as key actors in the phase-out. Uganda commented that a target should be set for the phase-out of the manufacture, export and use of lead shot.

During Friday's plenary, delegates considered the revised draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.7 Rev. 1) and its appendix. The draft resolution was adopted with minor textual amendments.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.7 Rev.1), the MOP, among other things, acknowledges the role of the Strategic Plan in establishing the priorities that guide the work of the contracting parties, Technical and Standing Committees, and the Secretariat, and the contributions made by an online national reporting facility to easing parties' reporting burden. The resolution, *inter alia*:

- adopts the Strategic Plan, attached as Appendix I;
- adopts and approves the use of the online national report format, as presented in AEWA/MOP 4.20;
- urges contracting parties, the Secretariat and other identified stakeholders to establish and implement budgeted work plans on the basis of the Strategic Plan, and requests donors to provide assistance for the implementation of these work plans;
- instructs the StC to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan;
- requests the StC to revise the *modus operandi* of the Small Grants Fund, and contracting parties to provide financial resources for the Fund;
- urges contracting parties to use the national reporting facility and provide feedback on the online reporting system;
- instructs the Secretariat to make the new format available in an offline version;
- instructs the StC to amend the report format after each MOP, in line with relevant decisions;

- requests the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat and UNEP, to harmonize the national report formats of CMS and AEWA, where possible; and
- requests UNEP to continue with its project on strengthening harmonization of and knowledge-sharing across biodiversity-related conventions.

#### **FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

The document on income and expenditures for 2006-2008 (AEWA/MOP 4.21) was discussed on Tuesday in plenary, along with the Draft Budget Proposal 2009-2012 (AEWA/MOP 4.22 Rev.1) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.8). Executive Secretary Bert Lenten said no shortfall is expected by the end of the current triennium, although many payments remain outstanding, and additional funding is needed. On the draft budget, cost-saving options, including reduced meeting frequency for the MOP and StC and reduced translation support for Technical Committee meetings, were met with resistance from parties. Executive Secretary Lenten emphasized that these measures can be avoided if states provide more funds.

In the working group on Wednesday, delegates discussed: the 15% and 20% budget-increase scenarios; increasing the minimum annual contribution to 1000 or 2000 euros; the impacts of budget options on Secretariat staffing levels, meeting frequencies and translation; the participation of francophone countries; and the connection between the budget and Agreement implementation. France and Mauritania highlighted language issues; the UK, Finland, and Denmark proposed taking the 20% budget option as a starting point; Nigeria and the UK emphasized administrative burdens and financial implications of MOP resolutions; and Tanzania and Nigeria proposed the minimum contribution increase.

On Thursday evening, after delegates returned from all-day excursions, the financial and administrative matters working group gathered to consider the revised version of the draft budget (AEWA Res. 4.8 Rev. 1), with the 15% increase option, and a minimum annual contribution of 2000 euros. This budget would allow for Secretariat staff consolidation and the maintenance of its activities, along with an increase in translation funds to 30,000 euros and funds for interpretation and travel subsidies for meetings. Executive Secretary Lenten outlined that, with the modified budget commitments, a 1000 euro increase in minimum annual contributions would still leave a shortfall in funds, while a 2000 euro increase would yield a modest surplus. He proposed, in the case of a surplus, that the additional funds be applied directly to the African Initiative. The UK praised the development of a budget with direct links to implementation activities. Regarding the list of priority projects (Appendix V to the draft resolution), delegates discussed: changing the name of the list to indicate its focus on implementation of the Agreement in Africa; extension or amendment of the shortened list of priorities; and the verification of costs for "Wings over Wetlands"-related priorities. The amended draft resolution gained approval from the group, with the understanding that an African regional meeting prior to Friday's plenary would be needed to determine if the budget could be accepted on these terms.

During Friday morning's plenary, Executive Secretary Lenten noted that the Secretariat would incorporate Wetland International's recommendation on how to regroup the initiatives related to the "Wings over Wetlands" project. Niger asked why the text referred to convening MOP-5 in 2012, instead of 2011, and Secretary Lenten proposed that reference to meeting in early 2012 be included instead, enabling the Secretariat to access the 2012 budget. He deferred the conversation until the discussion on the resolution about the date and venue of MOP-5 (AEWA Res. 4.21).

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.8 Rev. 1), and its five appendices, the MOP, *inter alia*:

- adopts the budget for 2009-2012, attached as Appendix I (Table based on 15% increase plus minimum contribution of 2000 euros);
- agrees with the scale of contributions as listed in Appendix II (Annual contributions scenarios) and on a minimum annual contribution of 2000 euros;
- instructs the Secretariat to develop budget scenarios based on the Strategic Plan for consideration at MOP-5;
- requests parties to consider paying their quadrennial commitments in a single installment, and to pay contributions as promptly as possible, and not later than the end of June of the year to which they relate;
- agrees to set a threshold of eligibility funding for delegates to attend AEWA meetings at 0.200% on the UN Scale of Assessments, provided sufficient voluntary contributions have been received, and to exclude from eligibility EU countries with strong economies and countries with payments in arrears of more than three years, as listed in Appendix IV (Eligibility for sponsorship for AEWA meetings);
- takes note of the IIPs 2009-2012 (AEWA Res. 4.10 and related appendices);
- urges parties and other partners to make voluntary contributions to support Agreement implementation;
- approves the decision to upgrade the post of Associate Technical Officer from P-2 to P-3, and to change the status of Associate Programme Officer, from limited duration (L-2) to fixed-term (P-2);
- invites contracting parties and UNEP to consider providing gratis personnel and/or Junior Professional Officers to the Secretariat;
- requests the UNEP Executive Director to extend the Trust Fund to 31 December 2012; and
- approves the terms of reference for the administration of the budget as set out in Appendix III (Terms of reference for the administration of the Trust Fund for AEWA).

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROJECTS**

##### **STRENGTHENING OF WATERBIRD AND WETLAND CONSERVATION CAPACITY IN NORTHERN AFRICA:**

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), in Wednesday's plenary.

**POSSIBLE SERIAL NOMINATION OF THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY AS WORLD HERITAGE SITE:** On Monday, regarding the adoption of the agenda (AEWA/MOP 4.3 Rev.1), Egypt suggested deleting the item on nominating the Great Rift Valley as a World Heritage Site (AEWA Res. 4.9), but delegates agreed to defer discussion on this issue to allow for further consultation.

In Tuesday's plenary, Executive Secretary Bert Lenten announced that in the amended agenda (AEWA/MOP 4.3 Rev. 2) the item on the Great Rift Valley had been changed to a discussion on wetland protection capacity building in Africa. In the following day's plenary, Secretary Lenten presented on a project on capacity building for waterbird and wetland conservation in Africa, which replaced the initial agenda item on the Great Rift Valley. He said a new resolution would be drafted.

In discussions of the financial and administrative working group on Wednesday, Executive Secretary Lenten introduced the new resolution on the African Initiative for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in Africa (AEWA Res. 4.9). 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 Executive Secretary 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.

During Friday morning's plenary, delegates adopted the African Initiative for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and Their Habitats in Africa (AEWA Res. 4.9 Rev. 1). The EU welcomed its approval, and the AU congratulated delegates, and urged African states that had not signed or acceded to the Agreement to do so as rapidly as possible.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.9 Rev. 1), the MOP instructs the Secretariat to:

- continue providing advisory services to the African range states;
- mobilize the necessary resources in close cooperation with other biodiversity-related convention secretariats;
- draft a plan of action for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in Africa, including a proposal for priority areas for MOP-5, in cooperation with the Technical Committee; and
- enhance cooperation with existing activities, conventions and organizations.

The MOP requests contracting parties to provide financial resources or in-kind human resources to establish a post for an Officer to coordinate activities in Africa, and invites range states, international organizations and other donors to support the Initiative.

#### **DRAFT INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES 2009-2012**

The draft IIPs 2009-2012 (AEWA/MOP 4.23) and related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.10) were introduced in Wednesday's plenary when Sergey Dereliev presented the relevant documents, noting 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.

In the following day's financial and administrative working group discussions, 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.

Delegates discussed the draft resolution on Friday in plenary. The EU requested that the word "priorities" be substituted with "tasks," and that the 2009-2012 period be replaced with reference to 2009-2016 or the period between MOP-4 and MOP-6. The draft resolution was adopted with these changes.

**Final Resolution:** In the resolution (AEWA Res. 4.10 Rev. 1), the MOP urges contracting parties and specialized international organizations to support ongoing projects and to develop new international cooperation projects for Agreement implementation, and to specifically support the "Wings over Wetlands" project as the highest priority for funding over the period. The MOP urges contracting parties, the Secretariat and specialized international organizations to seek innovative mechanisms and partnerships to enable implementation of priorities in its related appendix; requests donors to provide financial assistance for Agreement implementation; instructs the Secretariat to disseminate the International Implementation Tasks for the next period; and requests the Technical Committee to review the structure of the International Implementation Tasks to enhance their responsiveness to current and emerging issues identified by the international reviews.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO THE ANNEXES TO THE AGREEMENT**

**PROPOSALS:** The proposals to amend the AEWA Annexes (AEWA/MOP 4.24 and Inf. 4.2), and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.11) were introduced in Wednesday's plenary. Sergey Dereliev described proposals by Mauritius, Italy, Croatia and Libya. The discussion focused on the Mauritian proposal, supported by Madagascar, Guinea and Nigeria, 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 EC, on behalf of the EU, noted that seabird conservation would require coordination with regional fisheries management organizations. Norway questioned the added value of these additions, given budgetary limitations. The AU requested that food security issues be taken into account when adding species.

In the technical and scientific working group on Wednesday, delegates discussed redefining the geographical terms used in range descriptions, 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.

During Friday morning's plenary, the EC, on behalf of the EU, proposed to include text on the need to further refine species categorization in light of new terminology and the application of the IUCN Red List data. BirdLife International said it was appropriate for the Technical Committee to deal with the criteria

for the annexes, and committed itself to working with the Technical Committee. The draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.11 Rev. 1) was adopted with the proposed changes.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.11 Rev. 1), the MOP, among other things:

- agrees to include 20 additional seabird species in Annex 2 of the Agreement (waterbird species to which the Agreement applies) as described in document AEWA/MOP 4.24 (proposals for amendment to the annexes); and
- adopts the revised version of Table 1 of the Action Plan, as well as revised text to paragraphs 2.1.2(d) (Prohibiting the possession or utilization of, and trade in, birds and eggs, as well as their parts), 4.1.4 (Phasing out of lead shot), 4.3 (Other human activities), and 7.5 (Update of reviews) of the AEWA Action Plan.

The MOP requests the Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the amendments, and the Technical Committee to review: ornithological data on the little tern; definitions of geographical terms used in range descriptions of populations in Table 1 and to draft amendments, as appropriate; and taxonomic classifications of birds. It also requests the Technical Committee to draft a proposal for amendments to the AEWA Action Plan to contend with the effects of aquatic invasive non-native species on waterbird habitats.

#### **GUIDANCE FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF CRITERIA USED IN TABLE 1 OF THE AEWA ACTION PLAN:**

The interpretation of the 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) were introduced in Wednesday's plenary. Sergey Dereliev presented the relevant documents, explaining that the Technical Committee had developed guidance and definitions of terms on two of the three criteria.

In the working group discussions, delegates agreed on the draft resolution, which was later adopted during Friday morning's plenary without amendment.

**Final Resolution:** In the resolution (AEWA Res. 4.12), the MOP: adopts definitions of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan (AEWA/MOP 4.25); recognizes the further guidance on the use of these criteria presented in the Action Plan; and requests the Technical Committee to develop guidance for interpretation of the term "extreme fluctuations in population size or trend" used in Table 1 of the Action Plan.

#### **PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING AMENDMENT**

**PROPOSALS:** This topic was introduced in Wednesday's plenary. Executive Secretary Bert Lenten outlined the rationale for the draft resolution that proposes allowing the StC to forward amendment proposals to the MOP (AEWA Res. 4.13), noting that this would greatly facilitate the amendment procedure.

In the discussions of the financial and administrative working group, the EU, supported by others, opposed the consideration of the StC as a "party" that can propose amendments to the Agreement's annexes.

During Friday morning's plenary, the EU, questioned the need for the resolution, and stated that parties, not the StC, should decide on proposals for amendments to the annexes, and delegates agreed to the withdrawal of the resolution and its reconsideration at MOP-5.

### NEW DRAFT CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

The draft resolution related to the adoption of conservation guidelines (AEWA Res. 4.14) was based on guidelines concerning impacts of infrastructure development-related disturbance (AEWA/MOP 4.26) and guidelines on measures needed to help waterbirds adapt to climate change (AEWA/MOP 4.28), both introduced in Wednesday's plenary. The matter was referred to the afternoon meeting of the technical and scientific working group, where delegates agreed on the draft resolution, which was later adopted in Friday's plenary without amendment.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.14), the MOP adopts the guidelines concerning impacts of infrastructure development-related disturbance (AEWA/MOP 4.26) and the guidelines on measures needed to help waterbirds adapt to climate change (AEWA/MOP 4.28). The MOP calls upon contracting parties to utilize these guidelines in a way that minimizes additional bureaucracy and recognizes the different social, economic and environmental conditions within the Agreement area. The MOP instructs the Secretariat to disseminate these guidelines to all range states and relevant governments and NGOs, and to monitor their use to the extent that is possible.

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

The report and guidelines on climate change and migratory waterbirds (AEWA/MOP 4.27) and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.15) were introduced in plenary on Wednesday. Sergey Dereliev summarized the relevant documents. 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.

In the meeting of the technical and scientific working group, 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.

During Friday morning's plenary, Guinea Bissau called for including reference to vulnerable species in semi- and sub-arid regions. The resolution was adopted with the suggested changes.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.15 Rev. 1), the MOP, *inter alia*:

- calls upon contracting parties to develop and strengthen climate change-related research, monitoring and conservation action for waterbirds, and to focus future research on possible means of adaptation;
- instructs the Secretariat to assist in gathering and disseminating knowledge and expertise on climate-related waterbird research;
- requests the Technical Committee to identify further research priorities that will inform future adaptation measures and to assess whether the existing international networks of sites are sufficient for the protection of migratory waterbirds;

- urges contracting parties to designate and establish comprehensive and coherent networks of adequately managed protected and other sites; and
- urges contracting parties and other range states to maintain the ecological character of sites important for waterbird populations under climate change conditions through appropriate management measures; and
- further urges contracting parties and other range states to provide wider habitat protection with dispersed breeding ranges, migration routes or winter ranges where the site conservation approach would have little effect, especially under climate change.

### LATEST INFORMATION ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

The issue of avian influenza was first introduced on Wednesday. David Stroud, UK, presented the draft resolution on responding to the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), subtype H5N1 (AEWA Res 4.16), following a presentation by Scott Newman, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), on the activities of the CMS-led Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds. The AU 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.

In the technical and scientific working group on Wednesday, the UK proposed two new paragraphs for the draft resolution on collaboration with and among ministries, which were accepted.

On Friday, Executive Secretary Bert Lenten introduced the revised draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.16 Corr. 1 Rev. 1). Mali, Guinea, and the AU noted that in many African countries livestock and animal health fall within the responsibility of ministries and agencies outside of agricultural ministries. The draft resolution was adopted with minor amendments.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.16 Corr. 1 Rev. 1), the MOP:

- calls on parties and governments to strengthen efforts to integrate responses across departments, agencies, and ministries in HPAI contingency planning and outbreak responses;
- encourages the establishment of arrangements with specialist ornithologist expertise to advise governments on data and information gathering and use for risk assessment development, surveillance for wild birds, and response strategies and epidemiological investigations in case of outbreaks;
- encourages collaboration among ministries in responses to and investigations of outbreaks;
- advocates development of communication programmes aimed at promoting balanced understanding and awareness of risks and responses;
- urges development of information tools for decision makers who collect and synthesize data and information on waterbirds and wetlands;
- calls on parties to develop strategic approaches to enhance national capacity to detect and respond to emergent and re-emergent waterbird disease;

- encourages the continued work of the CMS-led Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds and the Secretariat's continued contributions to the Task Force's work;
- urges the use and dissemination of the guidance appended to the resolution; and
- urges parties to focus capacity-building activities on development and enhancement of monitoring programmes linked with the relevant ministries.

#### **DRAFT INTERNATIONAL SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS**

The draft International SSAPs (AEWA/MOP 4.29-4.35), the revised SSAP format (AEWA/MOP 4.36 Corr.1), and the related draft resolution (AEWA Res. 4.17) were discussed in plenary and in the technical and scientific working group on Wednesday. Sergey Dereliev, AEWA Secretariat, urged parties to commit funds to SSAP implementation.

In the working group, delegates agreed on the SSAPs on the maccoa duck, Madagascar pond heron, white-winged flufftail, and lesser flamingo without substantive changes. Denmark and Germany proposed corrections to descriptions of the Eurasian spoonbill populations in their respective countries; OMPO urged emphasis on predator control for the black-tailed godwit. The SSAP on the lesser white-fronted goose proved contentious because one of the species' populations is potentially derived from released captives, and delegates disagreed on appropriate conservation measures. The EU announced that a compromise draft SSAP, created by the relevant range states, would be circulated on Friday.

On Friday, the issue led to extended debate, focusing primarily on the lesser white-fronted goose and the black-tailed godwit. Additional amended text was proposed for the compromise version of the lesser white-fronted goose SSAP (AEWA/MOP 4.32 Rev. 2), which calls for future revisions of the SSAP in light of new information. On the black-tailed godwit SSAP, OMPO requested that "illegal hunting" be replaced by "poaching," but Germany opposed, and the text was not altered. OMPO also asked parties to consider the need for compensation for communities affected by restrictions on black-tailed godwit hunting, and Senegal underscored the relevance of this for implementation of the SSAP. Mali and the AU supported the intervention, but also noted the importance for godwit conservation of moving forward with the SSAP. The EC, on behalf of the EU, proposed that text be added to the resolution recognizing these issues, and it was agreed that the African Group and the Technical Committee should be tasked with amending the Plan accordingly. The MOP adopted the resolution and the related SSAPs, with the amendments, including altered language for the lesser white-fronted goose SSAP and the added provision for the black-tailed godwit SSAP.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.17), the MOP adopts the seven amended International SSAPs, and, *inter alia*: strongly urges national implementation of these and previously adopted SSAPs by contracting parties, and encourages implementation by non-contracting range states; calls on all relevant states, organizations and donors to provide assistance for the coordination and implementation of the SSAPs; and instructs

the Secretariat to disseminate these SSAPs to relevant parties and organizations, monitor their implementation, and report to the MOP on these activities.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY**

The closing plenary convened on Friday, 19 September.

**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE:** Nigeria, on behalf of the Credentials Committee, reported that of the 48 parties at MOP-4, 43 had submitted credentials, 38 of which were verified as correct. He said that five credentials did not meet the requirements of the Committee, as they were not original copies, were not translated into either French or English, or were not signed by the appropriate authority.

Algeria, supported by Guinea, suggested that since the Committee included representatives fluent in languages other than French and English, documents in other languages should be accepted. Executive Secretary Bert Lenten responded by calling attention to the rules of procedure of the Agreement on credentials languages.

**INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS: Standing Committee:** Executive Secretary Bert Lenten introduced the draft resolution on institutional arrangements for the StC (AEWA Res. 4.18). He noted that the resolution on the new mandate of the StC to undertake the International Review Process (AEWA Res. 4.6 Rev.1) would influence the workload of the Committee, and potential future Committee members should consider this.

The following countries were proposed for the StC: Norway, with Ukraine as alternate, for Europe and Central Asia; Syria, with Tunisia as alternate, for the Middle East and Northern Africa; Ghana, with Equatorial Guinea as alternate, for Western and Central Africa; and Uganda, with Madagascar as alternate, for Eastern and Southern Africa. The draft resolution was adopted without amendment.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.18), the MOP approves the list of regional representatives for the StC, as listed above. The MOP agrees that the Committee will meet biannually, and requests that it oversee and provide guidance on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2009-2017, as well as assume the functions of the AEWA IRP until a further decision of the MOP. The MOP decides to make a provision in the 2009-2012 budget for payment of reasonable travel expenses of appointed Committee members from developing countries or countries with economies in transition. It also requests contracting parties to provide financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition so they can be represented at Committee meetings as observers.

**Technical Committee:** On Friday, Sergey Dereliev, AEWA Secretariat, introduced the draft resolution on institutional arrangements for the Technical Committee (AEWA Res. 4.19). These arrangements included changing the rules of procedure to a *modus operandi*, to incorporate a process for nomination of parties to fill vacant Committee positions.

The composition of the Technical Committee remained largely unchanged, apart from the addition of John Mshelbwala (Nigeria) for Western Africa and Szabolcs Nagy as alternate for Wetlands International. Dereliev stressed that Technical Committee members are appointed in their personal capacity,

and noted that the positions for experts from Central Africa and Southern Africa remain vacant, as no nominations had been received from these regions. The draft resolution was adopted with minor textual amendments.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.19), the MOP adopts the *modus operandi* of the Committee, as attached in Appendix II to the resolution. It appoints the members and alternates named in the resolution's Appendix I to the Committee, instructs the Secretariat to provide the necessary support to the Committee, and encourages contracting parties to include Committee members in their MOP delegations.

**Cooperation with other bodies and processes:** Executive Secretary Lenten presented the Secretariat's work on the concluded Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) with OMPO (AEWA/MOP Inf. 4.4) and its ongoing efforts to develop a similar MOC with Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), a working group of the Arctic Council. Lenten described the MOC with OMPO as a precedent for encouraging similar cooperative efforts with other organizations. He noted the CAFF negotiations were paused due to a changeover in the CAFF Secretariat.

**DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST TO THE AGREEMENT: Agreement/MoU on Raptors and Owls in the African-Eurasian region:** Executive Secretary Bert Lenten introduced the relevant document (AEWA/MOP Inf. 4.5), noting that this initiative is being developed under the auspices of CMS. He said a meeting of range states, held in Loch Lomond, UK, in 2007, had decided to elaborate a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) rather than an agreement on the topic, while making no decisions on financial implications of the instrument. The EU suggested that a working group be established to coordinate cooperation between CMS and AEWA on the subject. The UK expressed that there should be no obligatory funding for the instrument by signatories. Germany expressed concern about the overlap between this MoU, the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Action Plan, and AEWA, calling for reflection on the future direction of AEWA.

**Launch of the Action Plan for the Central Asian Flyway:** Executive Secretary Lenten introduced the relevant document (AEWA/MOP Inf. 4.6), noting that the second meeting of range states, which had met in Delhi, India, in 2005, had finalized a CAF Action Plan but had not decided upon its legal status. He emphasized that CMS is taking the lead on this issue. Wetlands International said an interim coordinating mechanism on the CAF has been established under CMS, orchestrated by Wetlands International. The EU stressed the need for synergies between initiatives under CMS, and suggested that the AEWA StC keep the issue under review. Armenia and the Russian Federation preferred that AEWA be extended to include the CAF.

**MEETING REPORT:** Executive Secretary Lenten introduced the report of the meeting, inviting delegates to submit comments within two weeks of receiving the report.

**TRIBUTE TO THE ORGANIZERS:** Delegates adopted the draft resolution on the tribute to the organizers (AEWA Res. 4.20) without amendment. Executive Secretary Bert Lenten thanked countries and organizations for their financial and in-kind support for MOP-4. The EU highlighted the success of

the meeting on the budget and on the development of the African Initiative. The AU urged all range states to sign and ratify the Agreement.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.20), the MOP: expresses its gratitude to the government of the Republic of Madagascar and the AEWA Secretariat for the arrangements made to provide an excellent venue and facilities for MOP-4; congratulates the Secretariat on the excellent preparation of the documents; and expresses its support to the governments and NGOs that contributed to the MOP-4 preparations.

**DATE AND VENUE OF MOP-5:** Delegates decided to convene MOP-5 in early 2012, ideally after COP-11 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. France put forward its candidacy for hosting MOP-5. Having accepted France's offer, delegates adopted the resolution.

**Final Resolution:** In its resolution (AEWA Res. 4.21), the MOP resolves to hold MOP-5 in early 2012, ideally after Ramsar COP-11, and welcomes and accepts with great appreciation the offer from France to host MOP-5.

**OTHER MATTERS:** On Friday, Vice-Chair N'Diaye gave a presentation on the two-day pre-MOP negotiation workshop for anglophone African delegates. He said the workshop was intended to: strengthen negotiation skills; provide practical tools, skills and tips; and prepare negotiators for MOP-4. He outlined areas for future action, such as developing similar training for francophone African delegates.

The EU thanked delegates for finding solutions despite linguistic problems. The AU thanked African delegates for keeping the unity of Africa in mind during the negotiations.

**CLOSURE OF MEETING:** Lila Andriambalo (Madagascar) introduced Harison Edmond Randriarimanana, Madagascar's Minister of Environment, Forests and Tourism. She said AEWA should be proud of having generated a higher level of awareness of its cause. Executive Secretary Lenten highlighted the African Initiative and commitment to higher annual contributions as successes. Minister Randriarimanana commended delegates on their hard work, shared his views on the importance of migratory birds, and underscored Madagascar's commitment to conservation. He concluded with the hope that AEWA "keeps flying, and keeps flying at its high altitude." He declared MOP-4 closed shortly after 5:00 pm.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF AEWA MOP-4

MOP-4 began with some delegates exchanging binoculars and hiking boots for laptops and suits, and others – the anglophone African delegates who had taken part in a two-day pre-MOP negotiation workshop – preparing to put their newly-honed negotiation skills to use. While some participants were keen to focus their attention on specific aspects of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) – for example, phasing out lead shot or the Single Species Action Plan for the lesser white-fronted goose – many saw this meeting as symbolizing more than the resolution of a few particular issues. Instead, they envisioned the fourth Meeting of the Parties (MOP-4) as a critical step in setting the future direction of the Agreement, given its substantial budgetary and implementation challenges.

Even for seasoned delegates, MOP-4 was recognized as a critical juncture in the regime. New parties had joined over the years, significantly expanding participation in the Agreement; the Agreement was old enough that contracting states could begin to assess its effectiveness; and novel threats had emerged, presenting unprecedented challenges to waterbird conservation. Moreover, given the plethora of project proposals and consequent budgetary needs, states had to determine not only the appropriate scope of the Agreement, but also how committed they were to its success, namely their willingness to offer financial support to at least maintain – if not enhance – the level of activities of the Agreement.

This brief analysis examines the progress to date and future direction of this “fledgling” agreement by analyzing: areas of contention (“Ruffled Feathers”); opportunities for collaboration and partnerships (“Flocking Together”); and debates over the future direction of AEWA (“Which Route to Fly?”). It concludes with an assessment of the upcoming challenges and opportunities for waterbird conservation under the Agreement.

### **RUFFLED FEATHERS**

Delegates came to Antananarivo with several items in mind that they expected would ruffle feathers in the conference hall; they were also kept on the edge of their seats as unexpected contentious issues surfaced during the meeting. The most controversial areas related to funding constraints and implementation challenges.

Regarding funding constraints, there was no dispute that the Agreement was underfunded and its effectiveness was suffering as a result. Indeed, setting the stage for the days to come, AEWA MOP-4 Chair Tovondriaka Rakotobe (Madagascar) focused many of his opening remarks on the need for parties to follow through with annual fees. While budgetary limitations had numerous implications, such as for Secretariat staffing levels and new project adoption, discussion focused largely on translation costs and meeting expenditures. When English-only document translation was introduced as a potential cost-saving measure, many francophone delegates immediately raised their voices, arguing that such an arrangement was unacceptable. And, regarding the timetable for MOPs, some strongly opposed the suggestion of meeting on a four-year, rather than three-year, basis as a further cost-saving measure. In the words of one delegate, protracting the meeting schedule would “deprive us of the finest communication tool at our disposal.” However, Executive Secretary Bert Lenten was quick to point out that states – not the Secretariat – made the decisions, and if delegates wanted extra meetings and additional translation, their governments were the only ones who could make it happen.

As budget discussions unfolded, representatives of the NGO community reminded the participants that waterbird populations in the Agreement area continue to decline despite efforts, and urged them to focus on implementation.

Implementation challenges were arguably the most critical issue on the agenda, as they brought into question the Agreement’s effectiveness. In response to the introduction of new proposals, some states argued that parties should instead focus on implementing those activities they had already

committed to. Indeed, the Implementation Priorities for the current triennium did not differ substantially from those of the last, as there had been no funding for implementation of the majority of the previously identified priorities. However, other delegates argued that it was necessary to adopt additional projects and species coverage under AEWA, despite existing implementation challenges, for those species and conservation needs not governed by other processes.

### **FLOCKING TOGETHER**

To contend with these financial and implementation hurdles, many felt that it was clear that uncoordinated action would not suffice. These participants considered that, in many ways, MOP-4 served as an opportunity to brainstorm ways to build novel partnerships, not only between Eurasian and African states, but also with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), international organizations, NGOs and the private sector.

Given gaps in capacity, African countries called for European assistance on technical, communication and financial needs. However, with regard to AEWA’s budget, it was not clear how states should collaborate and share responsibility. Discussion focused on whether parties, regardless of their development stage, should be penalized for failing to follow through with financial contributions, as Tanzania proposed, and whether the wealthier European parties should foot most of the bill. By Friday, despite disparities in capacity, parties were able to finally flock together to strengthen the financial underpinnings of the Agreement by committing to budget increases.

It was also clear to delegates that partnerships had to be fostered beyond the range states and outside of the meeting’s hallways, especially in the context of the global economic downturn and its consequent effects on future financial contributions from existing partners. Moreover, delegates acknowledged that AEWA had to prove itself in the collaborations to which it had already committed: for example, fulfilling its share of funding for the UN Environment Programme-Global Environment Facility “Wings over Wetlands” project. Interestingly, mention of the private sector occurred on more than one occasion, but little substantive discussion was held on the form of this possible cooperation. It remains to be seen not only what the consequences of such partnerships would be, but also the level of interest of the private sector in the Agreement.

### **WHICH ROUTE TO FLY?**

Linguistic and budgetary challenges and means for collaboration dominated much of the agenda of MOP-4, with the outcomes of these debates largely setting the future direction of the Agreement. Debates focused on the appropriate scope of AEWA, as resource constraints – and, as some argued, effectiveness – are determined by the number of commitments under the Agreement. Some supported maintaining the current scope of the Agreement, which would enable the Secretariat to carry out the list of projects yet to be implemented, such as funding the “Wings over Wetlands” project. However, proposals for expanding the scope were central to the week’s negotiations.

Two proposals – the Mauritian proposal to include 20 new species of seabirds, and the initial proposal to nominate the Great Rift Valley as a World Heritage Site – illustrated this conflict.

While the Great Rift Valley nomination was replaced with a less politically contentious proposal of an African Initiative, which gained support from many for its focus on implementation of the agreement in Africa, this final resolution still expanded the Agreement's scope. The debate surrounding the inclusion of more seabird species continued throughout the week, and its resolution to include these species also expanded the Agreement's scope considerably. Discussion on two other issues – the Agreement/MOU on Raptors and Owls in the African-Eurasian region, and the Action Plan for the Central Asian Flyway – revealed similar concerns about AEWA's expanded responsibilities, but in this case, MOP-4 did not broaden the Agreement's scope. The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) currently governs these issues, and it became clear that the range states preferred separate instruments on these issues rather than an expansion of AEWA. However, cooperation between AEWA and CMS will be needed given overlapping species and ranges. One delegate even suggested that a working group be established to this end, an idea that will be kept under review. Collaboration between AEWA and CMS on these issues would no doubt place an additional burden on the Secretariat and will have cost ramifications; that said, the new Strategic Plan 2009-2017 tasks the two Secretariats to collaborate on national reporting, and this could pave the way for further cooperation.

Another critical question for the future of AEWA was whether the Agreement was equipped to contend with novel threats, such as climate change. For example, while one resolution outlined robust measures that could bolster resilience of waterbirds and the ecosystems they rely on, few delegates came to terms with the magnitude of resources and on-the-ground changes that would be required to follow through with the resolution.

## CONCLUSION

AEWA's current strengths lie in collecting and disseminating information on the conservation of waterbirds. Implementation of conservation projects woefully lags behind project conception, and, without substantial further commitments by parties, the Agreement will be placed "on the back burner," as one delegate cautioned, as parties prioritize their commitments to other, more established MEAs.

However, delegates at MOP-4 seemed acutely aware of this problem, and worked collaboratively, much like "birds of a feather," to produce tangible results that would set the stage for the Agreement's future. The increased budget commitments – even from the poorest countries – indicate real commitment to the Agreement and its implementation, and send a signal that parties take waterbird conservation and ecosystem protection seriously, especially in Africa. If parties continue to commit to financing, implementing and collaborating on the Agreement, AEWA may "fly high" in the future and prove to be the well-equipped and effective instrument for waterbird and flyway conservation that it was set out to be.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### IUCN FOURTH WORLD CONSERVATION

**CONGRESS:** IUCN's Fourth World Conservation Congress will be held from 5-14 October 2008, in Barcelona, Spain. Following the opening session on 5 October, the Congress will start with a four day World Conservation Forum, from 6-9 October, followed by the IUCN Members Assembly. For more information, contact: IUCN; tel: +41-22-999-0000; fax: +41-22-999-0002; e-mail: congress@iucn.org; internet: <http://www.iucn.org/congress>

**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS MANAGEMENT:** This Symposium will be held from 15-18 October 2008, in Thessaloniki, Greece. For more information, contact: Conference Secretariat; tel: +30-2310-252-103; fax: +30-2310-252-104; e-mail: [info@toplinetravel.gr](mailto:info@toplinetravel.gr); internet: <http://www.unesco.org/water/pdf/twm4.pdf>

### GEF COUNCIL MEETING AND NGO

**CONSULTATION:** The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council Meeting will be held from 10-14 November 2008, in Washington DC, US. A consultation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will be held on the first day. For more information, contact: GEF Secretariat; tel: +1-202-473-0508; fax: +1-202-522-3240/3245; e-mail: [secretariat@thegef.org](mailto:secretariat@thegef.org); internet: <http://www.thegef.org/>

**RAMSAR COP-10:** The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance will be held from 25 October - 4 November 2008, in Changwon, Republic of Korea. For more information, contact: Ramsar Secretariat; tel: +41-22-999-0170; fax: +41-22-999-0169; e-mail: [ramsar@ramsar.org](mailto:ramsar@ramsar.org); internet: <http://www.ramsar.org>

**SECOND MEETING OF SIGNATORY STATES TO THE GREAT BUSTARD MOU:** The second meeting of Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard will take place from 9-12 November 2008, in Feodosia, Ukraine. It is organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), together with the Ukrainian Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Ukrainian Society for Bird Protection and BirdLife International. For more information, contact: CMS Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2401/02; fax: +49-228-815-2449; e-mail: [secretariat@cms.int](mailto:secretariat@cms.int); internet: <http://www.cms.int/news/events.htm>

**FIRST MEETING OF THE CBD AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP (AHTEG) ON BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE:** This meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) AHTEG on Biodiversity and Climate Change will take place from 17-21 November 2008, in London, UK. The meeting will address scientific and technical matters concerning the links between biodiversity and climate change with regard to identifying risks and vulnerabilities, and impacts and opportunities from climate change mitigation. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); internet: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

**28TH MEETING OF THE BERN CONVENTION**

**STANDING COMMITTEE:** Organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), the meeting of the Bern Convention Standing Committee will be held from 24-28 November 2008, in Strasbourg, France. For more information, contact: Carolina Lasén Diaz, Bern Convention Secretary; tel: +33-3-9021-5679; fax: +33-3-8841-3751; e-mail: carolina.lasen-diaz@coe.int; internet: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/conventions/Bern/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/conventions/Bern/default_en.asp)

**CMS COP-9:** The ninth Conference of the Parties to CMS will be held from 1-5 December 2008, in Rome, Italy. It will be preceded by the 15th meeting of the CMS Scientific Council (27-28 November), a meeting of the Steering Committee of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project (28-30 November), the first Meeting of the Parties to the Gorilla Agreement (29 November), a meeting on arid land mammals (30 November) and the 34th meeting of the CMS Standing Committee (30 November). The second meeting on international cooperation on migratory sharks will be held from 6-8 December 2008, immediately following the COP. For more information, contact: CMS Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2401/02; fax: +49-228-815-2449; e-mail: [secretariat@cms.int](mailto:secretariat@cms.int); internet: [http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/cop9\\_meeting\\_docs.htm](http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/cop9_meeting_docs.htm)

**FOURTEENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC (COP 14) AND FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL (COP/MOP 4):** UNFCCC COP 14 and Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP 4 are scheduled to take place from 1-12 December 2008 in Poznan, Poland. These meetings will coincide with the 29th meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies and the fourth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) and the resumed sixth session of the AWG on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Protocol (AWG-KP). For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: [secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int); internet: <http://unfccc.int>

**FIFTH WORLD WATER FORUM:** This meeting will be held from 15-22 March 2009, in Istanbul, Turkey. The main theme will be "Bridging Divides for Water." For more information, contact: World Water Council Secretariat; tel: +33-4-91-99-41-00; fax: +33-4-91-99-41-01; e-mail: [m.giard@worldwatercouncil.org](mailto:m.giard@worldwatercouncil.org); internet: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=1842&L=1%20%3E%20water%20coucil%5D>

**CITES COP-15:** The fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will be held from 16-28 January 2010, in Doha, Qatar. For more information, contact: CITES Secretariat; tel: +41-(0)22-917-8139/40; fax: +41-(0)22-797-3417; e-mail: [info@cites.org](mailto:info@cites.org); internet: <http://www.cites.org>

**CBD COP-10:** The tenth Conference of the Parties to CBD is expected to be held in October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); internet: <http://www.cbd.int/>

**AEWA MOP-5:** The fifth Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement will be held in early 2012, in France, with the dates and venue to be determined. For more information, contact: AEWA Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2414; fax: +49-228-815-2450; e-mail: [aewa@unep.de](mailto:aewa@unep.de); internet: <http://www.unep-aewa.org>

**GLOSSARY**

AU	African Union
AEWA	African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement
CAF	Central Asian Flyway
CAFF	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna
CIC	International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
FACE	Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
IIP	International Implementation Priorities
IRP	International Review Panel/Process
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MOC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MOP	Meeting of the Parties
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OMPO	Oiseaux Migrateurs du Paléarctique Occidental
StC	Standing Committee
SSAP	Single Species Action Plan
UNEP	UN Environment Programme