

AEWA MOP 5 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 16 MAY 2012

AEWA MOP 5 convened for its third day in La Rochelle, France, on Wednesday, 16 May 2012.

Delegates discussed Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) and Species Management Plans (SMPs), the implementation of the African Initiative, the adoption of the new Arabic translation of the Agreement, and institutional arrangements.

During the afternoon, delegates convened in working groups on finance and administrative matters, and scientific and technical matters.

INTERNATIONAL SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS AND SPECIES MANAGEMENT PLANS

Sergey Dereliev, presented the document on SSAPs and SMPs (AEWA/MOP5.24) and the draft resolution (AEWA/MOP5 DR 8). Recalling that 21 SSAPs had been previously approved, he noted that four new plans and one revised plan, plus one species management plan, are tabled at MOP 5, while a SSAP for the shoebill is under preparation. He described challenges, including funding and international coordination on SSAP implementation, and introduced the seven recently initiated intergovernmental working groups for SSAP coordination.

Pete Robertson, UK Central Science Laboratory, presented on the control of the ruddy duck in the UK. He recalled that this North American species was introduced in the UK in the 1940s and hybridizes with the native white-headed duck, a globally threatened species, throughout Europe. Describing how funding through an EU LIFE Project has boosted eradication efforts since 2005, he said that less than 1% of the population is now remaining in the UK, but that significant populations persist in mainland Europe.

PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN INITIATIVE

Evelyn Moloko, Coordinator for the African Initiative, AEWA, presented on the Plan of Action (PoA) for the implementation of the African Initiative, outlining the report on the implementation of the African Initiative since MOP 4 (AEWA/MOP5.31) and the proposed draft PoA for Africa 2012-2017 (AEWA/MOP5.32).

Moloko described the Initiative's origins at MOP 4, core budget funding for some of its activities such as PoA development and support for additional activities, including the hiring of a coordinator, through voluntary contributions. After describing its initial expectations and approach, she outlined seven sets of outputs following its key activity areas, including: recruitment of personnel; a draft PoA for Africa; implementation of the AEWA Small Grants Fund in Africa, with five African projects funded in 2010; and initiation and promotion of synergies.

Benin, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, called the Initiative "a compass" that guided work towards the PoA. SOUTH AFRICA urged parties beyond Africa to also "take ownership of this initiative," noting the global benefits of migratory bird protection, and encouraged parties to think innovatively about regionally-appropriate capacity building and communication approaches. Joining with TOGO and others in thanking donors for their support, MALI pointed to the importance of political will in these activities. TUNISIA encouraged further synergies among organizations and MEAs working in the field.

Describing the development of the draft PoA for Africa (2012-2017) (AEWA/MOP5.32), Moloko said 54% of African parties had provided feedback. Tim Dodman, Consultant for the PoA development, explained the PoA was discussed and agreed at the Pre-MOP 5 workshop. He said key revisions to the PoA included: major revision of "sustainable use" actions, with new targets and strategic revisions; a greater emphasis on livelihoods and tourism; and increased budget. Moloko then outlined resolution AEWA/MOP5 DR9, highlighting the proposal to establish a "light coordination unit" within the AEWA Secretariat, accompanied by strengthened presence in the sub-regions.

In the ensuing discussion, the EU praised the "impressive action plan," but questioned the coordination approach. He announced that France would establish a France-based technical coordinator position that will technically assist the African-based subregional coordinators, and provide a link to the AEWA Secretariat.

Delegates agreed to consult informally on integrating France's funding offer into the draft resolution.

ADOPTION OF THE NEW ARABIC TRANSLATION OF THE AGREEMENT TEXT

Noting that problems with the Agreement's Arabic translation had been identified, Barbieri introduced the new Arabic Agreement text (AEWA/MOP5.23), prepared under the Strengthening waterbird and wetland conservation capacities in North Africa (WETCAP) project.

Libya, on behalf of ARAB COUNTRIES, expressed appreciation for the translation, but noted some corrections and reviews of the annexes were still required. The MOP agreed parties would submit proposed modifications to the SC by the end of 2012, and tasked the SC with validating the translation.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

COOPERATION WITH OTHER BODIES AND PROCESSES: Encouragement of further joint

implementation of AEWA and the Ramsar Convention: Recognizing the shared goals of AEWA and the Ramsar Convention, the EU introduced the draft resolution (AEWA/

MOP5 DR 19). SENEGAL suggested reference to the Memorandum of Cooperation recently signed by the Ramsar Convention and CMS and also proposed adding specific reference to the Ramsar Convention in all draft resolutions that mention MEAs. The RAMSAR SECRETARIAT proposed additional language to the text, including on other joint activities of relevance such as the Global Interflyway Network and the UNEP INFORMEA process. MOP will consider the revised resolution on Friday.

Promote twinning schemes between the natural sites listed by AWEA and the network of sites under the Ramsar Convention: The EU introduced the draft resolution (AEWA/MOP5 DR 20). Welcoming the initiative, NORWAY suggested that operative text on identifying twinning opportunities with different regions in a shared flyway should be broadened to include other parties. The RAMSAR SECRETARIAT suggested referring to Ramsar activities equivalent to those mentioned by AWEA. SENEGAL raised concerns about classification and nomenclature of protected areas, and agreed to consult with the EU on revised text.

WORKING GROUPS

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE: The Working Group, chaired by Øystein Størkersen (Norway), resumed on Wednesday afternoon to take up the “many unresolved” budget and associated matters. The closed session was punctuated by several breaks for informal consultations.

Participants expressed their openness to considering all budget scenarios, and some stressed the need for any decision on the budget to allocate more funds to the Small Grants Fund (SGF) for projects in Africa. The Working Group also agreed to the EU proposal to retain the Executive Secretary position at a P4 level, and some who initially supported a four-year MOP cycle expressed willingness to consider a three-year cycle on the condition of concessions on budget increases. For a P4 post, Størkersen outlined the options of advertising openly for a fixed position or recruiting internally for a new Acting head, noting the latter would imply that if the subsequent budget negotiation raised the position to a P5 level, the internal incumbent would be eligible for the spot.

Participants discussed the options in the draft core budget scenarios of a part-time African Initiative Associate Programme Officer as the African Initiative Coordinator at the Secretariat and a part-time African Initiative Programme Assistant. Options discussed included removing the part-time assistant, in light of the voluntary contribution offered by France for a full-time African Initiative position and creating a full-time Programme Officer post either by augmenting the 50% core funding through voluntary funds or by merging the two proposed part-time positions.

The Working Group established a “select” small drafting group, along with the Chair and Secretariat support, to work with the budget spreadsheet and reach agreement.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL: The Working Group, chaired by Malta Qwathakana (South Africa), met Wednesday afternoon.

Delegates approved the draft resolution on revision and adoption of conservation guidelines (AEWA/MOP5 DR 10).

On the draft resolution on power lines (AEWA/MOP5 DR 11), in response to concerns voiced by the AFRICAN GROUP, delegates agreed to move reference to the EU Birds Directive to a footnote. The draft resolution was then agreed.

Delegates approved the draft resolution on national reporting and the online reporting system, agreeing to add the wording “where applicable” to reference to harmonization with reporting for the EU Birds Directive. They also approved the draft

resolution on the adoption of amendments and new guidance for interpretation of terms used in the context of Table 1 of the AWEA Action Plan (AEWA/MOP5 DR 7)

In addressing the draft resolution on amendments to the AWEA Action Plan (AEWA/MOP5 DR 6), delegates discussed reference to: certain exemptions from prohibited hunting methods; species listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; and the use of lead fishing weights. Delegates agreed to revisit this issue after consultations with the TC.

Following some suggested minor amendments to the draft resolutions on international reviews (AEWA/MOP5 DR 2) and on agrochemicals (AEWA/MOP5 DR 12), delegates agreed to revisit these matters Friday.

David Stroud, UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee, introduced the resolution on climate change adaptation measures for waterbirds (AEWA/MOP5 DR 13), which encourages parties to complete the identification and designation of national protected area networks. The resolution was approved with minor amendments from the EU and BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL.

Stroud also introduced the draft resolution on waterbirds, wetlands and the impact of extractive industries (AEWA/MOP5 DR 14 Rev.1), noting commodity prices are driving a mining boom that is impacting wetlands. Delegates approved the resolution with minor amendments from the EU and the RAMSAR SECRETARIAT.

Stroud then introduced the resolution on alien aquatic weeds on waterbird habitats in Africa (AEWA/MOP5 DR 15), which was adopted with minor amendments from the EU.

Delegates approved the draft resolution on renewable energy and migratory waterbirds (AEWA/MOP5 DR 16) with minor amendments.

Dereliev presented the new SSAP of the slaty egret (AEWA/MOP5.25), which delegates briefly discussed. Delegates agreed to revisit the remaining SSAPs at the next meeting of the Working Group.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As MOP 5 delegates considered the Plan of Action for Africa on Wednesday, several were surprised by the EU’s offer, on behalf of France, to host an African Initiative technical coordinator in France. Some argued that if the “technical” side of the role was emphasized, this could lead to increased technical cooperation and support to subregional coordinators, and importantly for many African countries, in the French language. Others were skeptical, saying that emphasis on the “coordinator” side of the role was a foregone conclusion. Further, noting this proposal involved a new coordinator located neither in Africa nor at the AWEA Secretariat in Bonn, some worried about creating an additional layer of bureaucracy.

In an afternoon working group on the budget, participants considered not only overall funding levels, but scrutinized, line-by-line, its provisions. While many approved finding savings within the existing budget, which could then be reallocated to implementation efforts – such as the Small Grants Fund for projects in Africa – one developing country, worried about some of the cuts to Secretariat support, cautioned that if underfunded, the cost of the resulting poor work by the Secretariat would be “paid by the birds.”

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: Since field trips were held all day on Thursday, this is the last daily report from MOP 5. The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of MOP 5 will be available on Monday, 21 May 2012, online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/cms/aewa-mop5/>. A French translation of this document will be available shortly after that date.