



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Distr: General

UNEP/CMS/Inf/9.15.3
25 November 2008

Original: English

NINTH MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Rome, 1-5 December 2008
Agenda Item 9.0

REVIEW OF ARTICLE IV AGREEMENTS ALREADY CONCLUDED

- I. The Secretariat is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, the report provided by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), to accompany document UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.9.
2. The report is provided unedited in the format and language that it was submitted.

EXAMEN DES ACCORDS DE L'ARTICLE IV DEJA CONCLUS

1. Le Secrétariat diffuse ci-joint, pour l'information des participants à la neuvième session de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur les espèces migratrices, le rapport développé fourni par le Secrétariat d'Accord sur la Conservation des Oiseaux d'E au Migrateurs d'Afrique-Eurasie (AEWA) pour accompagner le document UNEP/CMS/Conf. 9.9.
2. Le rapport est fourni sans avoir été mis au point, dans le format et la langue dans lesquels il a été soumis.

REVISIÓN DE ACUERDOS ARTÍCULO IV YA CONCLUIDOS

1. La Secretaría adjunta, para información de los participantes a la Novena Conferencia de las Partes de la Convención sobre Especies Migratorias, el informe completo presentado por la Secretaría del Acuerdo sobre la Conservación de las Aves Acuáticas Migratorias de África y Eurasia (AEWA), en complemento en el documento UNEP/CMS/Conf. 9.9.
2. El informe se presenta sin modificaciones editoriales, bajo la forma y en el idioma originales.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE
CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS
(AEWA) TO
THE 9th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO CMS
(1-5 DECEMBER 2009, ROME, ITALY)**

INTRODUCTION

AEWA was concluded in 1995 and entered into force in 1999. So far 62 of the 118 Range States (+ the EU) to AEWA have ratified the Agreement and more are expected to do so in the months to come.

From 15-19 September 2008 the 4th session of the Meeting of Parties took place in Antananarivo, Madagascar hosted by the Government of Madagascar. The theme of MOP4 was '*Review of the past, vision for the future*'. Over 160 delegates from 80 countries, representing Contracting and Non-contracting Parties, IGOs and NGOs participated at this meeting and reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement. In addition, they guided the future direction of the Agreement primarily through the adoption of the first-ever Strategic Plan for AEWA as well as other decisions.

This report will only give a brief overview of the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement; a full overview is provided by the documents tabled at MOP4, which are available on the AEWA website: www.unep-aewa.org

<p>REVIEW OF THE PAST</p>

INTERNATIONAL REVIEWS

A set of seven international reviews on the implementation of the Agreement were submitted to MOP4.

In accordance with paragraph 7.4 of the AEWA Action Plan, the Secretariat in close cooperation with the Technical Committee and Parties shall prepare a series of international reviews necessary for the implementation of the Action Plan including:

- a) reports on status and trends of populations;
- b) gaps in information from surveys;
- c) the networks of sites used by each population, including reviews of the protection status for each site as well as of the respective management measures taken;
- d) pertinent hunting and trade legislation in each country relating to species listed under Annex 2 to this Agreement;
- e) the stage of preparation and implementation of Single Species Action Plans;
- f) re-establishment projects, and;
- g) the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof.

From the above-mentioned list the international reviews (a), (d), (e), (f) and (g) were compiled and tabled at MOP4. It was only possible to carry out this extensive piece of work due to the support received from several Contracting Parties.

While for reviews (d), (e) and (f) this was first submission to MOP, for review (g) this was its second edition and for review (a) this was its fourth edition.

The reviews (b) and (c) are part of the Wings over Wetlands UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyway Project (WOW) and it is expected that they will become available by the end of 2010.

In addition to the above-mentioned international reviews required by the AEWA Action Plan, the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Technical Committee, prepared an update report on the use of non-toxic shot for hunting in wetlands and a report on the effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds within the African-Eurasian flyways, thus providing insight into additional aspects of the implementation of AEWA.

General findings from these seven reviews tabled at MOP4 are that Contracting Parties have made considerable progress in the implementation of the Agreement. The key message from these reviews is, however, that even more has to be done by the Contracting Parties to fully implement the Agreement at national level. Where necessary and appropriate, the support of the Secretariat will be needed to meet this requirement.

AEWA is in an advanced stage of substantially reviewing the implementation of the Agreement by its Contracting Parties. The above-mentioned reviews provide valuable and in-depth information in addition to the more general information that could be drawn from the National Reports from Contracting Parties.

For additional information on the findings of each review please visit http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/mop/mop4_docs/mop4.htm

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AEWA ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan appended to the Agreement is divided into six sections under the headings:

- 1) Species Conservation;
- 2) Habitat Conservation;
- 3) Management of Human Activities
- 4) Information Management;
- 5) Research and Monitoring; and
- 6) Implementation.

1) Species conservation

International Single Species Action Plans

The following International Single Species Action Plans (SSAP) were adopted by MOP4

- Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*
- Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
- Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*
- Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*
- White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi*
- Madagascar Pond-Heron *Ardeola idae*

With the adoption of these 7 new Plans the total number of SSAPs adopted by past MOPs has been doubled. For more information on the SSAPs please visit: http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/technical_series.htm

Over the last three years AEWA has provided support to the coordination of the implementation of the SSAP for the Sociable Lapwing, the Black-winged Pratincole and the Red-breasted Goose. In addition, the post of Coordinator for the Lesser White-fronted Goose has been established within the AEWA Secretariat and is fully funded by the Government of Norway for the duration of one year.

Conservation Guidelines

Over the years, AEWA has developed 10 sets of guidelines dealing with a wide range of topics relevant to the conservation of migratory waterbirds. At MOP4, the following two guidelines were adopted:

- Guidelines on how to avoid, minimize or mitigate the impact of infrastructure developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds;
- Guidelines on the measures needed to help waterbirds adapt to climate change.

For more information on the AEWA Conservation Guidelines please visit:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/technical_series.htm

2) Habitat conservation

Naturally, most waterbird habitats are wetlands and at an international policy level they are thereby covered by the Ramsar Convention. Under AEWA, relevant practical conservation activities are underway through the development of a Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool as part of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project. The “CSN Tool” will combine the databases on Ramsar Sites, the International Waterbird Database, the Important Bird Area Database and the World Protected Area Database. It is expected that by the end of 2010 this tool will be operational. A first beta-version of the CSN Tool is now accessible via the WOW Project website: www.wingsoverwetlands.org

As a follow up to MOP4, particularly regarding the study carried out by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) on ‘The Effect of Climate Change on Migratory Waterbirds within the African-Eurasian Flyways’, the Technical Committee will review the sufficiency of the existing international networks of sites for the conservation of migratory waterbird populations, taking into consideration the projected climate change effects, and will suggest complementary approaches to be taken under AEWA.

3) Management of Human Activities

Over the past triennium the AEWA Secretariat partnered in a project on the development of Sustainable Hunting in the Middle East and North Africa implemented by BirdLife International. This project focussed particularly on the necessity to phase out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.

4) Information and education

Information activities

In 2005 the Government of Germany decided to provide a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) to work on Information Management for the Agreement. As of 17 October 2008, this arrangement came to an end. As foreseen in the budget 2006-2008, the JPO post would be followed by a fixed-term post. We are currently finalising the recruitment process and it is expected that the selected candidate could enter on duty from 1st of January 2009. Meanwhile, the incumbent of the JPO post received a temporary contract as an interim solution until the new post is filled.

At MOP3 the AEWA Communication Strategy was adopted. The main task of the JPO has been to implement the Communication Strategy. Furthermore, it should be noted that this post also includes the role of Communication Officer for the WOW Project for which 50 % of his time has been allocated. In addition to this, the incumbent has been dedicating 20 % of his time for the CMS Family. Altogether, this means that only 30 % of a full-time post was

available for the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy; significant outputs and achievements in the implementation of the strategy include:

I. Development of websites:

- a) For the Scientific Task Force Avian Influenza and Wild Birds: [www.aiweb.info]
- b) World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) [www.worldmigratorybirdday.orgy]
- c) Wings over Wetlands (WOW) [www.wingsoverwetlands.org]
- d) African Ringing Schemes (under construction) [www.afring.org]
- e) AEWA Technical Committee work space (password-protected web site)

Besides the development of these sites substantial improvement have been made to the AEWA Website.

II. Development of Information materials:

- a) Several publications under the Technical Series of AEWA (Single Species Action Plans, Guidelines and Reports);
- b) CD-Rom on the Avian Influenza Workshop, Nairobi 2005;
- c) Proceedings of MOP3;
- d) Regular AEWA Newsletters (hard copy);
- e) E-newsletter (sent out bi-monthly);
- f) AEWA Accession guide;
- g) Stickers;
- h) Posters (e.g. Sociable Lapwing, Madagascar Pond Heron, etc);
- i) WMBD Calendar.

III. Awareness-raising campaigns

With the outbreaks of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5NI in 2005, the need arose to avoid unjustified negative publicity on the potential role of wild birds in the spreading of this disease. The Secretariat, in close cooperation with CMS, established the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds.

In addition, the AEWA Secretariat initiated the World Migratory Bird Day. The launch of WMBD took place in April 2006 at a special event 'WINGS' in Laikipia, Kenya. Since then WMBD is celebrated annually and the number of countries participating has grown to 70 in 2008 with over 140 events. This is a remarkable achievement taking into account the limited financial and human resources available. The Secretariat is very grateful for the support received from our partner organisations and in particular support from BirdLife International, Wetlands International and UNEP who promoted the celebrations of WMBD through their networks.

Education and capacity building activities

AEWA has not yet focused on this area intensively; however training modules are being developed under the WOW project for several areas of the Agreement.

On 13-14 September 2008, a training workshop was organised in Madagascar, in close cooperation with UNEP. The focus was on improving the negotiation skills of African delegates to effectively participate in MOPs/ COPs of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Anglophone African delegates were invited and it is our plan to organise a similar training for the Francophone African delegates in the nearby future. This training workshop took place directly prior to MOP4 and helped these participants to participate more effectively in the deliberations and discussions during MOP4.

For the successful implementation of the AEWA Agreement more training and capacity-building is a must. The Secretariat will do its utmost in finding additional resources in the years to come and would welcome any support in this respect.

5. Monitoring and research

Over the last few years AEWA strongly supported the:

- 1) Establishment of Waterbird Ringing Schemes in Africa;
- 2) Desk study on impact of Marine Fisheries on Migratory Waterbirds in Africa;
- 3) Desk study on impact of Agrochemicals on Migratory Waterbirds in Africa;
- 4) Desk study on Traditional Knowledge on waterbird and wetland management in Africa;
- 5) Desk Study on Effect of Climate Change on Migratory Waterbirds within the African-Eurasian Flyways;
- 6) Annual International Waterbird Census in different regions;
- 7) Waterbird surveys in the Middle East;
- 8) Sociable Lapwing satellite tracking;
- 9) Effect of hunting and annual survival rates of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose

6. Implementation

Projects and programmes are developed to improve and support the implementation of the Agreement. At each MOP a list of International Implementation Priorities are tabled and adopted. The Secretariat is then tasked to fundraise for these projects. In addition to this list of priorities, the AEWA Secretariat aims to develop regional Programmes and to secure the funds needed for their implementation. So far the following Programmes/ major projects have been developed, with funding partly secured:

- 1) **Wings over Wetlands UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project;**
This project is in its final stage of implementation.
- 2) **WETCAP** focuses on capacity-building for waterbird and wetland conservation in Northern Africa.
The main donor for this project is the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (AECID), which has approved our proposal and will contribute up to € 1.6 million to this project.
- 3) **The African Initiative to strengthen the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats.**
This Initiative has just been adopted at MOP4 and work will continue to elaborate on this concept. A concrete proposal on this Initiative will be delivered at MOP5.

In the years to come the Secretariat will do its utmost to initiate and, if appropriate, to develop new programme/ project proposals.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

AEWA STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2017

The CMS Strategic Plan called upon the Agreements concluded under the auspices of CMS to develop Strategic Plans based on the CMS Strategic Plan. MOP3 decided to follow this call and MOP4 adopted the first ever Strategic Plan for AEWA through Resolution 4.7.

AMENDMENT TO THE LIST OF SPECIES COVERED BY THE AGREEMENT

After lengthy discussion at MOP3 and further review by the Technical Committee, MOP4 approved the inclusion of additional twenty species of waterbirds, traditionally referred to as seabirds, in Annex 2 of the Agreement. By doing this, potentially all waterbirds that would qualify as 'AEWA species' are now included. The decision taken by MOP4 is of great strategic importance because seabirds are an important part of our biodiversity and their conservation is of particular interest to countries such as Canada and Iceland; the decision to thus augment Annex 2 may provide the countries concerned with an extra incentive to join AEWA.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW PROCESS

To assist in the implementation of the Agreement an Implementation Review Process was established. It was decided that the Standing Committee will undertake that Process. Furthermore it was decided that the Standing Committee will assume the following activities:

- a) Upon receiving information on adverse effects or potential adverse effects on either migratory waterbirds or on their sites and habitats as a result of human activities, the StC shall submit the information to the Party in whose territory the above activities occur who shall respond immediately, addressing the incident under question.
- b) In agreement with the Party concerned, the StC may request a mission to assess the impact of the activity at issue on waterbirds, or on their sites and habitats on the spot.
- c) Upon the conclusion of its on-site assessment, the mission shall report to the StC on its findings. Based on these findings, the StC shall make recommendations to the Party concerned as to preventing or mitigating the impact at issue on waterbirds, or on their sites and habitats.
- d) The Party concerned will ensure that any measures undertaken regarding the activity, site or habitat under issue will be in accordance with its obligations under the Agreement and will be based on the precautionary principle. The Party concerned will inform the StC as to the above measures at the earliest opportunity, but no later than the next meeting of the StC.
- e) The StC shall prepare and submit to each ordinary session of the Meetings of the Parties, a report on its operations in the framework of the IRP;

It is expected that the Implementation Process will lead to an increase in the level of implementation of the Agreement.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST FOR THE FUTURE

In early 2008, CMS launched the Action Plan for the Central Asian Flyway (CAF). It should be noted that there is an overlap of 50 % between the CAF Action Plan and the AEWA Agreement in geographical terms as well as in species and populations coverage.

The second development is a Memorandum of Understanding for the African-Eurasian Migratory Raptors and Owls which was recently concluded under the auspices of the CMS. This MoU covers the whole AEWA region plus 12 additional Range States.

The AEWA MOP4 called for close cooperation between AEWA and these initiatives.

CONCLUSION

One of the outcomes of the international reviews is that 41 % of the AEWA populations for which trend data is available are still in decline. At least one of the AEWA Table 1 Column A /CMS Appendix I species, the Slender-billed Curlew, might already be extinct. The threats migratory birds are facing are rapidly increasing; for example, climate change is likely to have a very negative effect on several AEWA species that were listed as critically endangered according to IUCN red listing criteria. There is no time for contemplation; on the contrary we should boost our efforts to meet the 2010 target to halt the current rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. The AEWA Secretariat is ready to take increased action but will need substantial voluntary support to join other organisations in making a real and long-lasting change.