



Convention on the
Conservation of
Migratory Species of
Wild Animals



Agreement on the
Conservation of
African-Eurasian
Migratory
Waterbirds (AEWA)



Bonn, 30 October 2006

PRESS RELEASE

Green Light for new Avian Influenza Website at the 11th International Living Lakes Conference in Nanchang City, China on 2 November 2006

UNEP/CMS together with UNEP/AEWA will launch a new website on Avian Influenza to become known as **AIWEb** (www.aiweb.info), at the 11th International Living Lakes Conference in Nanchang City (near Lake Poyang in China) on 2 November 2006. The conference is the first international meeting on the topics lake protection, water quality, avian influenza and agriculture in this part of China. Approximately 200 participants are expected including Marco Barbieri, Scientific Officer from UNEP/CMS, who will be speaking about the Avian Influenza Task Force and presenting AIWEb to a wider audience.

The development of a clearing-house and information mechanism for the Avian Influenza Task Force was initially envisaged by participating institutions at the Seminar on Avian Influenza, Wild Birds and the Environment organized by CMS, AEWA and UNEP in April 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya. This innovative, web-based tool should help to improve international cooperation and information sharing on Avian Influenza and Wild Bird issues.

AIWEb will be the information hub of the International Scientific Task Force on topics relating to Avian Influenza and the Environment. It is a basic, but unique designated public website for the TF and a platform for information exchange and communication on current and emerging topics relating to AI, Wildlife and the Environment. Its design includes an area for Task Force statements, background and press releases, as well as designated areas for Scientists, Policy Makers and the Media.

The AIWEb project has been designed and funded entirely in-house by CMS and AEWA with technical support by the UNEP Director Division of Communications and Public Information (DCPI).

In August 2005, concerns about the role of migratory birds as potential vectors of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus subtype H5N1, led UNEP/CMS in close

cooperation with UNEP/AEWA, to establish a Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds. The Task Force aims to bring together best scientific advice on the conservation impact of the spread of avian influenza, assessing the role of migratory birds as vectors of the virus, and issuing advice on the root causes of the epidemic as well as technically sound measures to combat it and develop early warning systems.

The Task Force comprises 13 members and observers, including UN bodies, wildlife treaties and specialist intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

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