



REPORT OF THE UNEP/AEWA SECRETARIAT to the 41st Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee

INTRODUCTION

The current report covers the work of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the period between November 2012 and November 2013.

This report is divided into five sections:

1. General management, which includes recruitment of Parties and cooperation with other organisations;
2. Information management;
3. Implementation and compliance;
4. Project development;
5. Other activities and outputs.

1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Recruitment of Parties

Gabon and Morocco became Contracting Parties as of 1 December 2012. Swaziland became a Contracting Party as of 1 January 2013. Côte d'Ivoire and Iceland became Contracting Parties as of 1 June 2013. Burkina Faso became a Contracting Party as of 1 October 2013. This brings the total number of AEWA Parties to 72.

For some other countries, the accession process is quite advanced and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is working closely with their Governments to further advance the process. They include Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Mauritania, Rwanda, South Sudan and Zambia.

Russian Federation

The Ministry of National Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation convened an International Seminar on the accession of the Russian Federation to AEWA. The seminar took place on 21 August 2013 in Moscow, at the premises of the Ministry of National Resources and Environment. A few international participants from AEWA bodies and Parties attended the meeting. The purpose of the seminar was to examine in detail the conditions for, and implications of the Russian Federation's accession to AEWA, and define next steps in the accession process. A resolution, synthesizing the main outcomes of the seminar, is being prepared by the conveners.

Botswana

An AEWA accession workshop was held in Botswana on 5 and 6 November 2013, aimed at facilitating the accession of the country to AEWA. The workshop also contributed to fulfilling the extensive stakeholder consultation, required at the national level. It was jointly organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, BirdLife Botswana and the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), with financial support from the Government of Switzerland, DWNP and the Government of Botswana - United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

Cameroon

An AEWa accession mission was conducted in Cameroon on 13 - 14 August 2013, during which meetings were held with the Prime Minister and Head of Government, the Minister of Forestry and the Director of Wildlife and National Parks. This aimed at advancing the process of the country's accession to AEWa, as well as other relevant instruments of CMS (particularly the Gorilla Agreement).

Strategic Cooperation with other Organizations

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

A Resolution of Cooperation (ROC) between the CAFF and the UNEP/AEWa Secretariats was signed on the occasion of the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 12 July 2012 in Bucharest, Romania. Following the signing of a similar ROC between the CAFF and the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, a trilateral joint work programme CAFF/CMS/AEWa was developed. As a first practical initiative to initiate their cooperation, the organizations have been fundraising for a proposed project to develop an Arctic Breeding Migratory Bird Analysis based on the Arctic Species Trend Index (ASTI). The project aims to analyse existing trend data of Arctic breeding migratory bird populations from several sources to better elucidate the patterns of decline and thus enable to identify regions, taxa and habitats at most imminent threat and prioritize conservation efforts. The UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWa Secretariats were successful in securing funding from UNEP, and the analysis has been contracted out to an external contractor. The UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWa Secretariats also submitted a joint statement to the meeting of the CAFF working group, which took place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, 10 - 12 September 2013.

Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats

The Flyway Partnership between BirdLife International, Wetlands International, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat and the UNEP/AEWa Secretariat was formed following the conclusion of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project in 2010. Its aim is to build on the effective institutional partnerships which were forged in the context of the GEF-sponsored project and to try to translate the achievements made under WOW into a long-term, collaborative, flyway-scale programme for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and the wise use of wetlands along the African-Eurasian Flyways. Since the first partnership meeting in February 2011, the UNEP/AEWa Secretariat has taken on the role of Secretariat for the Flyway Partnership. Within the fulfilment of this role, the UNEP/AEWa Secretariat is in the process of developing a Flyway Partnership website which will help facilitate the work of the partnership and act as a one-stop-shop for information related to the work of the partnership. An informal face-to-face meeting of the Flyway Partnership took place in November 2012 in Bonn hosted by the UNEP/AEWa Secretariat. Options are being explored for the convening of a formal meeting that should, *inter alia*, re-state the functions of the partnership, clarify the role of members, the chair and the Secretariat, and define a short-term work plan.

BirdLife International / Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

In May 2013, the UNEP/AEWa Secretariat had a number of strategic meetings in the United Kingdom including with BirdLife International and with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The meetings covered a wide range of topics, including the further development of the Online Reporting System (ORS), BirdLife International's role in the AEWa Governing Bodies, cooperation with regard to activities on seabirds, power lines and renewable energy impacts, agrochemicals, poisoning, lead shot, bird taxonomy, streamlining the conservation status review, AEWa Single Species Action Plans, Communication and World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD). During the one-day visit to RSPB's main office, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between AEWa and RSPB to work together to compile an International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) for the Eurasian Curlew.

2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Nomination of National CEPA Focal Points

AEWA Resolution 5.5 invites Contracting Parties to nominate a suitable AEWA National Focal Point for Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA). The task of the CEPA Focal Point is to coordinate both national and regional implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy, as well as to contribute to its revision process. As of November 2013, the Secretariat has received nominations from 17 Contracting Parties. An up-to-date AEWA CEPA Focal Point List is being maintained by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, with the latest available version posted on the AEWA Website: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/cepa/>

The expected roles and responsibilities for National CEPA Focal Points were discussed and endorsed by the 9th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee, 18 - 19 September 2013. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat considers that the network of CEPA Focal Points has now reached the critical mass for the initiation of activities including the organization of the first set of AEWA CEPA workshops, possibly linked to the planned revision process of the AEWA Communication Strategy.

CEPA Expert and Working Group in the Technical Committee

As requested by AEWA Resolution 5.5, an expert Working Group on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) within the AEWA Technical Committee was established at the 11th Meeting of the Technical Committee (TC 11) which took place from 27 - 30 August 2012 in Accra, Ghana. The main tasks of the TC's CEPA Working Group is to provide advice and prioritization on the ongoing implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy and to guide and give input to the revision process of the Strategy. A designated CEPA Expert in the Technical Committee has, unfortunately, not yet been identified, mainly due to lack of proposed candidates.

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2013 (also see UNEP/CMS/StC41/16.1 section 32)

On 11 - 12 May 2013, over 350 separate awareness-raising events were held in 88 countries to mark World Migratory Bird Day 2013.

The theme for 2013 was "Networking for migratory birds" highlighting the importance of ecological networks as well as networks between governments, organizations and people for the survival of migratory birds. As in previous years, World Migratory Bird Day 2013 broke all records when it came to public outreach and number of registered events and countries. Of those known to have taken place (i.e. those registered on the WMBD website), WMBD events took place in 37 AEWA Contracting Parties and a further 18 in AEWA Range States.

Amongst the highlights for 2013, was a major regional World Migratory Bird Day celebration near Lake Elementaita, Kenya organized by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and attended by more than 300 guests, including CMS Ambassador Ms Kuki Gallmann as well as representatives from 12 other Eastern and Southern African countries. This event represents a key activity in the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA Result 4.3.2), which calls for the organisation of one major WMBD event in a different African sub-region each year.

In addition, a special charity concert organized by the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats for the benefit of the Grey Crowned Crane took place in Bonn and a record number of inspiring statements to mark WMBD 2013 were solicited by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat from global personalities such as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner and others.

The global 2013 World Migratory Bird Day campaign as well as the first Regional WMBD celebration for the Eastern African Region was made possible through the kind voluntary contribution by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2014

World Migratory Bird Day 2014 will take place on the weekend of 10 - 11 May 2014. The theme for 2014 will be linked to the topic of tourism and migratory birds, focusing on the global bird – and wildlife watching industry and sustainable tourism as a vehicle to conserve migratory birds and their habitats. It is planned to work closely with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in promoting the “Destination Flyways” Project, which is a common project between the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats and UNWTO focusing on the protection of migratory birds and their habitats and the creation of sustainable livelihoods for local communities through the development of innovative tourism products along the world’s major flyways.

CMS Family-Related Communication Activities

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been actively participating in and significantly contributing to a number of common information and communication-related activities of the CMS Family. Below is a short summary of some of the main activities to which the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has actively contributed to since MOP5. Most of the listed activities directly or indirectly relate to the implementation of CMS COP Resolution 10.9 on the “Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS and CMS Family”.

CMS Family Database and Website Project (also see UNEP/CMS/StC41/16.1 section 10)

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat actively participates in a special working group set up to steer the CMS Family Database and Website Project. The project is led by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat and aims to bring together and improve the overall information management, interoperability and presentation of CMS Family data on the Web. The project is made possible through funding from the CMS Trust Fund as well as from AEWA, EUROBATS, the CMS Sharks MoU, the CMS Abu Dhabi Project Office and voluntary contributions from Finland and Germany.

Development of Online Workspaces for CMS Family Scientific Advisory Bodies (also see UNEP/CMS/StC41/16.1 sections 13 and 14)

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat actively participated in a project to technologically upgrade the successful AEWA Technical Committee workspace and to develop workspace duplicates for the CMS Scientific Council, and the EUROBATS and ASCOBANS Advisory Committees. These workspaces are now in use by the members of the scientific advisory bodies of the CMS Family and provide the different working groups with a web-based, password-protected communication space and working area. All workspaces are now being hosted on a single “CMS Family Server” and the cost of maintaining the sites is being shared evenly amongst participating CMS Family Instruments.

Online National Reporting System (ORS) (also see UNEP/CMS/StC41/16.1 section 15 - 18)

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in close cooperation with the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, has been actively pushing for a further development and expansion of the CMS Family Online Reporting System (ORS) developed by the UNEP World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) since the system was used for the first time by AEWA Parties to report to MOP5. Meanwhile, the use of the system has expanded, with the CMS, ASCOBANS and CITES Secretariats now being confirmed users of the ORS and with other MEAs such as the Ramsar Convention showing interest.

A joint letter from the Biodiversity Liaison Group was sent to the Executive Director of UNEP to seek possible support from UNEP for fundraising for a further development of a common MEA reporting system. UNEP-WCMC as developers of the ORS have also been exploring multiple possibilities for funding such a common project and a sub-working group was formed within the MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative (IKM) to ensure more coordinated approaches to the further development of and fundraising for a common MEA reporting system.

CMS Family-Related Meetings

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat actively participated in a large number of internal CMS Family- related meetings on a wide range of common communication-related topics such as the above-mentioned website and workspaces projects, development of a CMS Family Style Guide, World Migratory Bird Day 2013, the development of a CMS Family National Focal Point (NFP) Manual and the further development of the Online National Reporting System. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat also actively contributed to the CMS & AEWA NFP Manual Workshop and other meetings relating to the UNEP-ENRTP Project.

Furthermore, the AEWA Information Officer continues to act as the CMS Family Focal Point and Steering Committee Member for the UNEP Information and Knowledge Management Initiatives for MEAs Initiative (IKM).

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

AEWA Single Species Action and Management Plans

Coordination of Implementation of AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans

A total of nine AEWA International Single Species Working Group websites have been developed by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to further facilitate the work of the Working Groups of existing AEWA International Single Species Action Plans. The new websites are modelled on the successful AEWA Technical Committee Workspace, featuring internal workspaces to facilitate the work of the species working groups.

The AEWA International Species Working Group websites for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) and for the Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) were launched in 2012 and the website for the Svalbard Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) was launched in September 2013. The respective websites can be visited at <http://lesserwhitefrontedgoose.aewa.info>, <http://blacktailedgodwit.aewa.info> and <http://pinkfootedgoose.aewa.info/>.

Further websites have been created and will be launched as they become available for the:

- Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* (Coordinator: Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust/Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds)
- Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* (Coordinator: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)
- Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* (Coordinator: BirdLife International/RSPB)
- Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*
- White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi*
- Madagascar Pond-heron *Ardeola idae*
- Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula*

The development of the websites was made possible through a generous voluntary contribution to AEWA from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

The Secretariat is currently in the process of identifying new coordinating organizations to take over the facilitation of the groups:

- Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*
- White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi*
- Madagascar Pond-heron *Ardeola idae*

A coordinating organization has been identified (and a Memorandum of Cooperation concluded) for the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) International Single Species Action Plan (Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust), but the Working Group has not yet been convened.

In addition, the Secretariat is also in the process of identifying a coordinating organization for the Slaty Egret (*Egretta vinaceigula*) International Single Species Action Plan. The respective Working Group will be convened by the Secretariat as soon as the coordination has been clarified.

AEWA Species Expert Groups

For adopted International Single Species Action Plans where the involvement of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the establishment of inter-governmental AEWA International Single Species Working Groups are not considered to be a priority, stakeholders will be encouraged to take the initiative and put in place AEWA Species Expert Groups (as outlined in AEWA Resolution 5.8¹).

At its 11th Meeting in August 2012, the AEWA Technical Committee adopted Terms of Reference for the AEWA Species Expert Groups, the establishment of which has been prioritized for the Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*) and Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) International Single Species Action Plans.

Expert coordination groups have already been established for the Eurasian Spoonbill (Eurosites) and for the Light-bellied Brent Goose (Irish Brent Goose Research Group), but these have yet to be linked to the AEWA Species Expert framework.

Single/Multi Species Action and Management Plans under development

Work has progressed on a number of new Single/Multi Species Action and Management Plans as prioritised by the AEWA Technical Committee at its 11th Meeting in August 2012. Species/populations were ranked for the prioritisation on the basis of four criteria: IUCN Red List status, population size estimate, population trend estimate and vulnerability to climate change². The Secretariat expects these plans to be completed in time for adoption at the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP6) in June 2015.

Shoebill

An action-planning workshop for the Shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*) took place on 9 - 12 October 2012 in Entebbe, Uganda. Following consultations with the Range States and the AEWA Technical Committee, the draft International Single Species Action Plan was preliminarily approved by the AEWA Standing Committee in September 2013. Final approval of the Action Plan is foreseen to take place at MOP6 in 2015.

African Cranes

The African Crane Conservation Programme (a partnership between the International Crane Foundation and the Endangered Wildlife Trust) has made a commitment to work with the Secretariat on raising funds and compiling Single Species Action Plans for three species/populations of cranes in Africa (Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus*, Blue Crane *Grus paradisea*, and Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*). Funding was secured for an action-planning workshop for the Grey Crowned Crane, which took place on 10 - 13 September 2013 in Musanze, Rwanda.

African Seabirds – Multi-species Action Plan

For nine African species/populations on the priority list, the Secretariat is preparing to launch an action-planning process for Southern African seabirds in cooperation with the BirdLife International Global Seabird Programme. The Multi-Species Action Plan is set to cover the following species/populations: Bank Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax neglectus*), African Penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), Cape Gannet (*Sula capensis*), Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii dougallii*), Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia caspia*), Antarctic Tern

1 www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/mop/mop5_docs/final_res_pdf/res_5_8_ssap_and_mp.pdf

2 www.unep-aewa.org/documents/priority_aewa_populations_ssap_smp_2012-2015.pdf

(*Sterna v. vittata* and *tristanensis*), Crowned Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax coronatus*) and Great Crested Tern (*Sterna bergii enigma*).

Taiga Bean Goose

An action-planning workshop for the Taiga Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis fabalis*) took place on 12 - 14 November 2013 in Helsinki, Finland, hosted by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture. A drafting team led by the Finnish Wildlife Agency has been convened to coordinate the preparation of the Action Plan.

Eurasian Curlew

An action-planning workshop for the Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius a. arquata*) took place on 1 - 3 October 2013 in Wilhelmshaven, Germany back-to-back with the International Wader Study Group Conference. A second meeting to cover the other two sub-species within the AEWAs range (*Numenius a. orientalis* and *suschkini*) is tentatively foreseen to take place in March 2014, pending the availability of sufficient funds. The development of the Eurasian Curlew International Single Species Action Plan is being coordinated by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB – BirdLife partner in the UK) under a Memorandum of Cooperation with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

Long-tailed Duck

An action-planning workshop for the Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) is tentatively foreseen to take place in Estonia on 23 - 25 April 2014, pending the availability of sufficient funds. The development of the Action Plan is foreseen to be coordinated by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT).

Species Action Plans under revision

Two International Single Species Action Plans are currently being revised - for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) and the Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*). Both revised International Single Species Action Plans are expected to be presented to MOP6 for adoption in 2015.

Implementation Review Process

The Implementation Review Process (IRP) was established at MOP4 in 2008. Three cases have been opened under the IRP since then, which are still under review:

- Syrian Arab Republic: Illegal hunting of the critically endangered Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*)
- Montenegro: Drainage of the salina of Ulcinj for tourism development
- Bulgaria: Windfarming project adjacent to Lake Durankulak putting at risk the globally threatened Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

The cases in Montenegro and Bulgaria have continuously been followed up, mainly by correspondence. No further follow-up actions have, however, been taken in the case on the Syrian Arab Republic due to the complicated political situation in this country.

Renewable energies

For the implementation of the Powerline Resolution 5.16 adopted at MOP5, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been facilitating discussions on the options to establish an intergovernmental working group on the energy sector under CMS, which would cover the African-Eurasian region and also involve, for example, the CMS Raptors MOU as well as other MEAs such as the Bern Convention.

A review and guidelines on the impact of renewable energy developments on migratory species is being commissioned as a joint project between CMS, AEWAs, The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and BirdLife International. The report and subsequent guidelines are expected to cover all

migratory species and all renewable energy sources. Both report and guidelines are foreseen to be ready by CMS COP11 in 2014. The implementation of the prospective resolutions under CMS and AEWA are to be dealt with by the energy sector working group if and when convened.

Waterbird harvesting

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been involved in the re-launch of the Wetlands International Waterbird Harvest Specialist Group (WHSG), which took place on 28 August 2013 at a special session on waterbird management at the 31st Congress of the International Union of Game Biologists (Brussels, Belgium, 27 – 29 August 2013). This included assisting with the development of the new WHSG Terms of Reference and the general concept for the group. Re-activating the group is a response - in part - to an increase in activities related to the sustainable management of waterbirds within the AEWA region. The group will, in particular, aim to promote science-based knowledge and to act as scientific advisors in national and international processes where harvest is an issue for conservation or management of waterbird species and species populations. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is a member of the WHSG Board. In addition the Secretariat is providing the WHSG with a website including an internal workspace modelled on the recently developed the AEWA International Single Species Working Group websites

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat continues to contribute to the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership hosted by Wetlands International, which was established in response to the call by Resolution 3.6 (MOP3, 2005). The Secretariat, in particular, attends meetings of the Partnership's Strategic and Policy Group.

The Secretariat is also a member of the CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Bird Poisoning and took part in a workshop organized by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat in May 2013 in Tunisia. In this context, the Secretariat has, in particular, been leading on the issue of lead poisoning. In addition, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has been involved in the Bern Convention process on the illegal killing of birds and also took part in a subsequent meeting organized by the Bern Convention in Tunisia in May 2013. In this context, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has put forward the idea to establish an inter-governmental Task Force to eradicate illegal killing, trapping and unsustainable use of birds in the Pan-Mediterranean region.

The AEWA African Initiative

Efforts have been made by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat towards advancing the implementation of the Agreement in the African region, particularly with regard to the implementation of Resolution 5.9 on the implementation of the African Initiative, and its annexed AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2017.

Coordination of the African Initiative within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat

In July 2013, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat was successful in securing voluntary funds from the Swiss Government (Federal Office for the Environment – FOEN) to supplement the funds in the AEWA core budget for the post of the Coordinator for the African Initiative up to a full-time position (100%). The agreement signed between the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Swiss Government covers the needs for the year 2013 and confirms the readiness of the donor to consider further financial support for subsequent years. At the time of writing, a request from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to establish and advertise the post of Associate Programme Officer - African Coordinator is being processed by the competent services at UNEP and UNON³.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, moreover, succeeded in securing funding for the position of the Programme Assistant from the Government of Germany, for the period of November 2012 to December 2015.

3 United Nations Office in Nairobi

Technical support from the French Government for the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA)

A Technical Support Unit (TSU) for the African Initiative was established within the Tour du Valat Research Centre in the Camargue, France, in November 2012. The French TSU has meanwhile been involved in implementing activities in the African region, which contribute to the implementation of the AEWA PoAA.

Sub-regional National Focal Point Coordination for the implementation of the AEWA PoAA

Two sub-regional National Focal Point (SrNFP) meetings for Northern Africa and for Southern and Eastern Africa were organized to identify priority activities for each sub-region within the AEWA PoAA, particularly those which could benefit from the expertise and support of the TSU. A third meeting for Western and Central Africa is scheduled to take place in December 2013, with some co-funding already provided by the French Government. The meetings serve additional purposes, such as the election of SrNFP Coordinators among the AEWA National Focal Points in each sub-region, who will be responsible for guiding the implementation of the AEWA PoAA at the sub-regional level.

The sub-regional meeting for Northern Africa took place in El Kala, Algeria, in June 2013, back-to-back with a meeting of national IWC coordinators for northern African countries, thanks to funding from the French Government and the MAVA Foundation, and at the kind invitation of the Government of Algeria. It was organized by the Direction Générale des Forêts (General Directorate for Forests) in partnership with the El Kala National Park, Tour du Valat, the TSU and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, Waterbird monitoring was identified as a priority need in the region and it was agreed that a regional project will be developed and that funds would be raised for it. The AEWA National Focal Point for Algeria (M. Ammar Boumezbeur) was elected as the SrNFP Coordinator for the Northern African region. The meeting also provided some comments on the draft ToR for SrNFPs.

The SrNFP meeting for Southern and Eastern Africa took place in Cape Town, South Africa from 27 - 28 October 2013, back to back with a workshop for National Focal Points of CMS, AEWA and other CMS instruments (referred to as the *CMS Family National Focal Points*).

In the course of this AEWA sub-regional meeting, the National Focal Points agreed that priority for the two sub-regions should be given to the management planning for protected sites of importance for migratory waterbirds; to an increase in quantity and quality of migratory waterbird population data; to awareness raising, in particular with regard to Eastern Africa; and to the incorporation of the Flyway Training Kit⁴ into the curricula of wildlife colleges, specifically for Southern Africa.

Mr Barirega Akankwasah - AEWA National Focal Point for Uganda as well as Vice-Chair and Regional Representative of the AEWA Standing Committee - was elected as the SrNFP Coordinator for Eastern Africa. For Southern Africa, Mr Wisdom Dlamini, representing the AEWA National Focal Point for Swaziland, was chosen from among the AEWA National Focal Points.

This sub-regional meeting was organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in collaboration with the Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the AEWA African Initiative, and was kindly hosted by the Republic of South Africa.

The AEWA Small Grants Fund

The AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF) supports the implementation of AEWA in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. It became operational in 2010 and has so far been implemented in the African region only, due to the limited funding available to run this programme.

Under the 2012 cycle, the following two projects were funded:

⁴ The Flyway Training Kit was developed under the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project, 2006 - 2010.

- the sustainable management of the Tocc Tocc Community Natural Reserve located in northern Senegal, funded for the amount of 22,692 Euros and to be implemented for 12 months;
- the conservation of the Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*) in the Queen Elizabeth conservation area in South-Western Uganda, funded for 22,690 Euros and to be implemented for 12 months;

The support for the implementation of these two projects was made possible thanks to the funding allocated in the AEWA core budget for SGF projects in Africa, as well as a voluntary financial contribution from the United Kingdom.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has called for project proposals from Africa for the 2013 cycle of the AEWA SGF. The deadline for the submission of project proposals is 30 November 2013.

Flyways Training of Trainers Workshop

A Regional Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop on the Flyway Approach to the Conservation and Wise Use of Waterbirds and Wetlands was organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in close cooperation with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in Naivasha, Kenya from 6-10 May 2013.

The workshop took place in the framework of the AEWA African Initiative and included 19 selected participants from 13 Eastern and Southern African countries. Among the participants were two recently-nominated National CEPA Focal Points from South Africa and Zimbabwe.

In line with AEWA Resolution 5.4 and Resolution 5.5 as well as Result 3.2.1 of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa, the successful workshop made use of the Flyway Training Kit (FTK) developed under the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project. The highly interactive workshop was made possible through funding from the Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP) Strategic Cooperation Agreement between the European Commission - DG Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Project on “Effective Implementation of CMS, AEWA and other CMS-Family instruments across various regions and languages through capacity building”

Addressing the need for improving the capacity of institutions responsible for implementing CMS and AEWA (as laid down in the CMS Strategic Plan 2012-2014, CMS COP10 Capacity Building Work Plan for 2012-2014 and the AEWA Action Plan and Strategic Plan 2009-2017), the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats developed and submitted a project proposal which was approved for a € 500,000 grant under the Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP) Strategic Cooperation Agreement (SCA) between the European Commission - DG Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The project is currently being implemented by the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats and focuses on the African region.

The project has four major components which aim at addressing the overall objective of strengthening the institutional capacity to implement CMS, AEWA and other CMS instruments:

- Supporting the organization of an African preparatory workshop for the AEWA MOP5, aimed at finalising the draft Plan of Action for Africa, which was approved by the meeting, and enhancing the participation of the African region in the MOP (accomplished in May 2012).
- Training National Focal Points (NFP) of CMS, AEWA and other CMS instruments in their roles and responsibilities with the support of a designed and developed manual, e-learning tool and associated workshops.
- Improving knowledge on waterbird and wetland conservation and improved capacity for training at the national level in Africa, through two Training of Trainers sessions using the WOW Flyway

Training Kit (for Anglophone countries in Southern and Eastern Africa and Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa).

- Enhancing the participation of NFPs from the Africa and Latin America regions in the CMS COP 11 and AEWa MOP6. This component is scheduled to be implemented in 2014, and foresees the convening of COP-preparatory regional meetings for Africa and Latin America. For the African meeting, the participation of AEWa NFPs is foreseen in addition to CMS NFPs, with a view to giving input to the substantive preparation of AEWa MOP6. In connection with this component, the UNEP/AEWa and UNEP/CMS Secretariats have developed a proposal for some complementary activities to be implemented under Phase 2 of the project “Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in ACP⁵ Countries (ACP/MEAs 2)”, which include the convening of a dedicated AEWa pre-MOP workshop for National Focal Points (NFPs) of the Africa region. The UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWa Secretariats have recently received confirmation that funding for the AEWa pre-MOP would be made available.

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

9th Meeting of the AEWa Standing Committee

The meeting was held in Trondheim, Norway on 18 - 19 September 2013, at the kind invitation of the Norwegian Environment Agency.

In addition to the items mentioned earlier in this report the agenda also included the adoption of a revised AEWa national reporting format for 2012 - 2014, the approval of which is a crucial step forward to launching the MOP6 reporting cycle in the beginning of 2014. The Standing Committee, moreover, discussed the participation of AEWa in the Migratory Species Champion Programme proposed by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat.

In addition, the Standing Committee received a preliminary analysis on the implications of the possible extension of the Agreement to include the Central Asian Flyway. Following an articulated discussion, the Committee requested the Secretariat and the consultant contracted to undertake the analysis to produce a revised version of the report taking into account the comments made at the meeting, and tasked the Secretariat with circulating the revised version to all AEWa Parties for wider consultation and comments.

The CMS Executive Secretary also attended the meeting to brief the Standing Committee on the development of a new Strategic Plan for Migratory Species and lead discussions on its possible implications for AEWa. In addition, Dr. Chambers led a closed session Standing Committee discussion on the pending recruitment of the AEWa Executive Officer and a proposal for greater synergies between the CMS and AEWa Secretariats.

The Standing Committee endorsed the outcome of the recruitment process, and agreed on the appointment of the new Executive Officer of AEWa on an interim basis, to be reviewed by MOP6 in light of a possible appointment of a joint Executive Secretary for AEWa and CMS. In this regard, the Committee invited the Executive Secretary of CMS in consultation with the interim Executive Officer of AEWa to bring a proposal to the AEWa MOP6 on a possible joint Executive Secretary for its consideration. It also invited the interim Executive Officer of AEWa and the Executive Secretary of CMS to develop further synergies between AEWa and CMS and take actions to merge common services and common areas in an effort to redirect the focus of the Secretariats towards strengthening implementation support.

Dr. Marco Barbieri, who had covered the position on an interim basis since May 2011, returned to the CMS Secretariat shortly after the Standing Committee to take up a new position as Scientific Advisor in the CMS Secretariat. Since 18 October 2013 Mr. Bert Lenten, Deputy Executive Secretary of CMS, has been acting as Officer-in-Charge of AEWa until the new interim Executive Officer will enter on duty.

⁵ Africa, Caribbean and Pacific

All AEWA Standing Committee meeting documents are available at:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc_overview.htm