

2004 EVIAN ENCOUNTER MEETING

**Wetland Conservation and Wise Use
in the Himalayas - Hindu Kush - Pamir - Alay and the Mekong River Basin**

1 - 5 November, 2004, Royal Evian Hotel, Evian, France

BACKGROUND

High altitude wetland conservation has become an increasingly significant global issue in recent years. In August 2002, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, and the Government of the People's Republic of China successfully organised a regional workshop which resulted in the Urumqi Call for "the conservation of Himalayan High Altitude Wetlands".

In November 2002, the Ramsar 8th Conference of the Contracting Parties passed Resolution VIII.12 calling for the conservation and wise use of mountain wetlands.

In August 2003, a follow-up workshop was organized in Kathmandu, Nepal, by WWF, ICOMOD and the Ramsar Secretariat, which confirmed the Urumqi Call, agreed specific steps for the implementation of Ramsar Resolution VIII.12, and endorsed ICIMOD to develop a concept and full proposal for a regional initiative on wetland conservation and wise use. To promote the process, participating countries agreed, in principle, that a regional centre for high mountain wetlands should be established. A Task Force consisting of government representatives and international institutions, and an Advisory group consisting of individual experts was formed to advance this work.

In February 2004, the Task Force and Advisory group convened in Sanya, People's Republic of China. All participants confirmed once again the importance of a regional initiative. In order to promote regional cooperation, an interim committee was formed during the workshop.

The Ramsar Secretariat sees in this initiative a very important process for the implementation of the convention in Asia. By extending this invitation to the Mekong River Basin countries, we underline the importance of the integrated approach, "*from the Mountains to the Sea*", to conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

PROGRAMME

Monday, 1 November 2004

Participants will be picked up from Geneva airport to Royal Evian Hotel. Specific arrangement for each participant will be noticed late.

19:00 Welcome reception and dinner at the Veranda restaurant (Royal Evian Hotel)

Tuesday, 2 November 2004

Meeting venue is Salon Doronic, (Royal Evian Hotel)

- 09:00 - 09:25 Welcome statements and introductions:
- Dr Peter Bridgewater, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat
 - Mr Christophe Lefebvre, International Affairs Officer at the French Coastal and Lake Shore Conservancy, coordinator of the Danone Evian Ramsar Fund programme
 - Other participants
- 09:25 - 09:40 Briefing on the Evian Project: objectives and expected outcomes of the Evian Encounter
Speaker: Christophe Lefebvre
- 09:40 - 10:30 The Ramsar Convention as an instrument for international and regional cooperation on the conservation and wise use of wetlands
Speaker: Dr Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat.
- 10:30 - 11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:00 - 11:30 Development of a Regional Strategy for High Andean Wetlands Speaker: Ms. Margarita Astrálaga, Senior Advisor for the Americas, Ramsar Convention Secretariat.
- 11:30 - 12: 30 Review of the Himalayan High Mountain Wetland Conservation Initiatives. Speaker: Dr Guangchun Lei, Senior Advisor- Asia/Pacific, Ramsar Convention Secretariat
- 12:30 - 14:00 Lunch Break
- 14:00 - 17:00 Country presentations (I) Contracting Parties: progress on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Tajikistan and Vietnam. Each country will have 15 minutes, followed by a 5-minute discussion - 20 minutes in all).
- 17:00 - 17:30 Coffee Break

17:30 - 18:30 Country presentations (II) non-Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, on their wetland conservation and wise use (Bhutan, Laos, and Myanmar). Discussion on their accession to the Ramsar Convention.

19:00 Dinner at the restaurant l'Ermitage

Wednesday, 3 November 2004

Morning: Visiting Evian

08:00 Departure by bus

08:30 Visit to the Evian factory in Amphion

11:00 Visit to the Pré-curieux site - Conservatoire du littoral- in Evian.

12:30 -14:00 Lunch Break

Afternoon: meeting in Salon Doronic (the Royal Evian Hotel)

14:00 - 16:30 Regional Cooperation and Integrated River Basin Management

- Conservation and Development in Himalayan Region: a mountain perspective.
Speaker: Mr XU Jianchu, Programme Manager, Water, Hazard & Environmental Management, ICIMOD
- Mekong River Basin: Promotion of Integrated Water Resources Management .
Speaker: Dr Chumnarn Pongsri, Director, Environment Division, Mekong River Commission Secretariat
- IRBM around the world. Speaker: Mr Denis Landenbergue, Manager, Wetlands Conservation, Living Waters Programme, WWF International
- Climate Change and its impacts on mountains: A focus on the Himalayan region. Speaker: Prof. Martin Beniston, Director, Geography Unit, Department of Geosciences, University of Fribourg
- Wetland inventory in the Himalayan Mountain Region. Speaker: Dr Doug Taylor, Wetlands International.

16:30 - 17:00 Coffee Break

17: 00 - 18:30 Discussion on regional cooperation and future development of the Himalayan Initiative

Note: discussions will cover the roles and functions of the regional facilities, the setting up of the decision-making body (Standing Committee), and the advisory body (Technical Committee).

19:30 Transfer by minibus for dinner at the Savana Lodge - Casino d'Evian

Thursday, 4 November 2004

Morning: Meeting in Salon Doronic, Royal Evian Hotel

- 09:00 - 10:30 Continue the discussion of regional cooperation and finalization of future plans and priorities.
- 10:30 - 11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:00 - 12:00 Conclusion of the Evian Encounter
- Agreement on a modus operandi for Himalayan and Mekong regional cooperation.
 - Concluding remarks by Dr Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention.
- 12:00 Departure by bus for an Lunch at restaurant l'Echelle in Bernex (mountain village)
- 14:30 - 16:30 Visit to the Evian water catchment area (approximately a two-hour walk through forest and wetland of the "pays de Gavot". Warm clothes and hiking shoes are recommended)
- 16:30 - 17:30 Presentation of the local protection policy of the Evian Water catchment area by Jean Christophe Bligny from the Evian Water company
- 18:00 Reception at the Mairie d'Evian by Marc Francina, Mayor of Evian
- 20:00 Dinner in the Salon de la Rotonde (Royal Evian Hotel)

Friday, 5 November 2004

All participants will travel by bus from Evian to Geneva. Those whose flight leave late in the day may leave their luggage at the airport. Those who leave on 6 (or 7) November will be accommodated at the Ibis Airport Hotel. These arrangements will allow participants to have one day to visit the organization(s) of their choice in Geneva, or the city.

Saturday, 6 November 2004

Departure of most participants.

Annex: List of participating Countries, institutions

Contracting Parties	Non-Contracting Parties	Institutions
Bangladesh	Bhutan	ICIMOD
China	Laos	Mekong River Commission
Cambodia	Myanmar	WWF International
India		IUCN
Kyrgyz Republic		Wetlands International
Nepal		Ramsar
Pakistan		
Thailand		
Tajikistan		
Vietnam		