

## **43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**

### **Report of the Subgroup on COP11**

1. The Subgroup on COP11 met on 31 October at 1500 h. Subgroup members present were Romania (Chair), Canada, Croatia, Lebanon, Marshall Islands, Panama, the Republic of Korea, and Uganda. Thailand was absent.
2. The Chair greeted the members of the sub-group and the observers who were present. The Secretary General (SG) then reminded the meeting that COP11 will be very important and thanked Romania for hosting the event.

#### **Logo and Slogan for COP11**

3. The Chair presented the logo and slogan ('Wetlands: home and destination') for COP11 and these were warmly greeted by the Sub-group members and observers.

#### **Financial update**

4. The Chair explained that the Ministry of Environment and Forestry had overall leadership of the organization of the COP before introducing the structure of the inter-ministerial committee that had been set up to advise on organizational issues. He explained that the budget for the event was mainly from the government's own budget but that it will be supplemented by donations from the private sector. Overall, the budget for the event has been secured and planning is going well.

#### **COP website**

5. Ms. Alexandra Spânu reported that all the information related to the COP will be placed on a Romanian special meeting website that is now being developed. It will not be possible to issue visas at the airport or at frontiers and so all participants are encouraged to register as early as possible and provide all the relevant information so that the host can arrange for the participants' visas to be issued at the relevant consulates as soon as possible. Romania also requested that the list of participants be provided to them as soon as possible by the Secretariat.

#### **Hotel reservations**

6. The Chair explained that the necessary arrangements are being made by the Ramsar Team and by MKA for sponsored delegates and Ramsar staff.

#### **Availability of the necessary rooms**

7. The Romanian host is following up on comments by the Ramsar Team who visited the venue in June 2011, to ensure that sufficient rooms, both small and large, will be available during the COP for all meetings, including small group meetings and break-out sessions.

#### **Ministerial segment**

8. Replying to the request from SC42 to hold a high-level segment during COP11, the Chair reported that although all high-level officials would be welcomed to attend COP11, there was no additional budget to hold such a high-level segment and no time available in the current agenda. He then suggested that the proposal could be reconsidered for COP12 but it would not be possible for COP11. The SG repeated that whilst ministers would be welcomed to participate, it would not be wise to send special invitation letters to them or to discuss a special event.

#### **Pre- and Post-COP11 field visits**

9. Carmen Damian reported that a complimentary set of excursion within travelling distance of Bucharest will be offered on 24th June. She recognized that many participants would like to visit the Danube Delta but the site is some 4-5 hours drive from the capital and so one and a half days would be needed for the visit. She therefore suggested that this should be a post-meeting trip and then explained the itinerary for such a trip.
10. She then gave a report on proposed visits to eight other wetland sites within various distances from Bucharest and which cover a range of habitats from commercial fishponds to islands, lakes, river confluences and river floodplains. Further information on these sites and the full itinerary will be provided to participants later on, and the visits will focus on sites with high natural and cultural values. Pre- and post-conference tours will also be made available in due course.

#### **Work of the Ramsar Team**

11. Sandra Hails gave a report on the work done, in progress and planned by the Ramsar Secretariat Team. These included:
  - Visiting the venue in June 2011 with a logistics team and since then, staying in close contact with the Romanian organizing team;
  - Hiring a consultant to work on the online registration website which will be live in March 2012;
  - Sending out a fundraising request Contracting Parties (CPs) to provide financial support for those CPs on the OECD/DAC list to attend COP11;
  - Preparing a new Ramsar home page with the COP11 logo that will take readers to the pages with more info about the COP. She thanked Ms. Lynn Sorrentino, the temporary webmaster and Communications Officer for her assistance in this work.
  - Presently identifying appropriate key-note speakers.

Overall, she reported that preparations within the Secretariat are progressing well.

#### **Questions from the floor**

- In response to a question from Uganda about the ministerial segment which was discussed at the Africa Regional Meeting, and whether a roundtable meeting could be arranged for the ministers if they were to come, the Chair replied that all high-level officials would be welcomed at COP11. He added that a working lunch or dinner could be arranged for them where they could discuss common issues but it would not be possible to arrange a whole-day or even half-day meeting for them given the already full agenda.
- Iran thanked Romania for hosting COP11 and asked when information about the side-events will be made available, and whether visits would be made to wetlands that are being

successfully managed to benefit local communities? The Ramsar Secretariat replied that announcements for side events will be made on the COP11 website in early 2012. After the deadline for proposals, the Secretariat will then review the requests and select those events that best support the Draft Resolutions that will be discussed during COP11. The Secretariat will also ensure that similar side-events will not be held at similar times. In response to the question about field visit, the Chair replied that the government is continuously working to develop projects at wetland sites that support the local community as well as conserve the species found there.

- Lebanon asked when invitations to COP11 will be sent since it may take public servants much time to get approval to attend. He also asked when further information about the sites for field visits will be available to participants, so that they can decide which sites to visit? The Ramsar Secretariat replied that much of the information about the COP will be up on the dedicated webpage in February 2012 and by March, people should be able to register for COP. Information on the pre- and post-COP11 field visits will also be placed on the web so people can decide which tours to join. The Secretariat noted that formal invitations to Contracting Parties have already been sent by diplomatic and through email channels and that further information on the COP will be made available regularly between now and the COP.
- WWF express strong support for the COP and the sites to be visited. He saw the COP as a good opportunity to share experience within Romania and the region regarding wetland management and private sector participation in wetland conservation. The Chair then thanked WWF for their support of the event, including the organisation of some of the proposed field visits.
- Finally, the Chair repeated that as the venue is a high security building, it is important that all COP11 participants must pre-register so that their names will be included in the list of participants that will be used at the entrance to the venue to ensure that they will be allowed in. It is also important that all participants carry their passport or other international identification with them at all time when they are in the building.