This workshop in Arebbusch Lodge (Windhoek, Namibia) was the fourth in a series for Ramsar CEPA Focal Points and the first to take place in the African continent. It brought together CEPA Focal Points and other representatives from 10 countries in southern Africa, as well as representatives from the 3 non-Contracting Parties in this sub-region, Angola, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

The workshop was jointly organised by the Ramsar Secretariat and the Namibian Directorate of Scientific Services within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), and was generously funded by the Danone Fund for Water, with some travel support helpfully provided through the Convention’s Biosphere Connections partnership, and internal transport and other support provided by the MET.

This workshop follows its predecessors in partially implementing the Convention’s CEPA Programme, adopted as Resolution X.8, which urges the Ramsar Secretariat to strengthen the capacity of the CEPA National Focal Points, both Government and NGO, through the provision of training and toolkits. Following the requirements of the Resolution, this workshop aimed to assist the CEPA Focal Points (Government and NGO) in understanding their lead role in delivering one of the key requirements of the Resolution – CEPA action planning at some level whether it be national, sub-national, catchment or local site level – and providing them with some tools and practical experience in using them to develop essential the skills for their challenging task.
The workshop was opened by Mr Simeon Negumbo, Under Secretary in the MET, and other honoured guests at the opening included Ms Lousia Muptami, Director of Scientific Services at the MET, Mr Kenneth Ulisebe, the Head of Namibia’s Administrative Authority and the National Focal Point, and Mr Samuel Nunyoma, Governor of the Erongo Coastal Region.

Participants were first given a brief overview of the Convention and reminded of the key elements of the Convention’s CEPA programme, its key goals, key implementers, specific roles for the CEPA NFPs, available CEPA tools - and the need for CEPA planning.
The workshop delivered approaches to CEPA planning at three levels reflecting the reality for participants in their own countries: CEPA Action Planning induced by a bigger programme or framework (e.g. Ramsar’s World Wetlands Day); CEPA Action Planning integrated into a Wetland Management Planning process or as part of a Wetland Management Plan; and CEPA Action Planning at the national level.
Using these levels participants were given basic guidance and introduced to various action planning tools in presentations but then spent a considerable amount of time working in small groups and thus gaining experience in using the tools (visioning, situation analysis, stakeholder analysis, problem trees, objective setting etc) to plan for World Wetlands Day and, at a larger scale, to CEPA plan at site level. Using a local wetland, Goreangab reservoir in Windhoek, participants were provided with the necessary background information by Mr Martin and then a site visit, including discussions with local stakeholders, so that they were able to use these tools for CEPA planning for Goreangab back at the workshop.

Field trip: Participants visiting one of Goreangab’s ‘problems’ a now defunct dyeworks that resulted in water pollution at Goreangab. Martin Shikongo, an officer with Windhoek municipality with responsibility for the wetland, briefs participants on the situation. Martin was also a workshop participant.

The workshop was facilitated by Esther Koopmanschap, from Wageningen UR Centre for Development Innovation with assistance from Sandra Hails and Melike Hemmami.

Report and photos by Sandra Hails

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