

**Communication, capacity building, education,  
participation and awareness (CEPA):  
Draft resolution on CEPA**

*Prepared by the Secretariat*

**Action requested:**

The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached Draft Resolution for consideration by the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

**Introduction**

*Decision SC63-24 instructed the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution reflecting on the consolidation of Recommendations and Resolutions on CEPA submitted in Document SC63 Doc.16 and approved through Decision SC63-22, and the views of the Standing Committee on the process and timeline for nominating the Panel for the 2025-2028 triennium.*

*Financial implications of implementation*

Paragraph 15	Secretariat to assist in strengthening the capacity of the CEPA Focal Points through the provision of resources, training, toolkits, and templates for CEPA activities; and to provide technical support for CEPA National Focal Points through the establishment of a network for their knowledge sharing	Cost to be determined; core budget allocation
--------------	--	---

**Draft Resolution XV.x on Communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA)**

1. RECALLING Recommendation 4.5 on *Education and training* and Recommendation 5.8 on *Measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves*, adopted at the fourth and fifth meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties respectively;
2. ALSO RECALLING Resolution VI.19 on *Education and public awareness*, Resolution VII.9 on *The Convention's Outreach Programme, 1999-2002*, Resolution VIII.31 on *The Convention's Programme on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) 2003-2008*, Resolution IX.18 on *Establishment of an Oversight Panel for the CEPA activities of the Convention*, Resolution X.8 on *The Convention's Programme on communication, education,*

*participation and awareness (CEPA) 2009-2015*, Resolution XII.9 on *The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024*, adopted at the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 12th meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, respectively;

3. RECALLING that, in Resolution XIII.5, on *Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention*, the Conference of the Parties initiated a process for the preparation of a new approach for advising on and supporting CEPA in the Convention, incorporating input from the CEPA Oversight Panel, the Working Group on CEPA Implementation, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Standing Committee, Parties and the Secretariat; and that this approach was adopted through Resolution XIV.8 on *The new CEPA approach*;
4. RECOGNIZING the valuable role of CEPA in supporting the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands and of the Strategic Plans adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
5. RECOGNIZING that Contracting Parties, the International Organization Partners of the Convention, and other partners have different capacities and priorities, and that the CEPA programme provides flexibility in implementation;
6. CONGRATULATING the Contracting Parties that have implemented CEPA activities within their territories, and particularly those that have incorporated these into wetland management plans, the Parties that have developed wetland centres at Wetlands of International Importance and other wetlands, the Parties that promote participation in wetland planning and management, and the Parties that have reported celebrating World Wetlands Day; and NOTING that a number of Parties have not yet made significant progress in many of these areas;
7. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the work done by the Secretariat of the Convention and the CEPA Oversight Panel in developing the CEPA programme, and the Panel's oversight of the implementation of CEPA programmes since 2005; and
8. COMMENDING the excellent work undertaken with very scarce resources to implement the Convention's CEPA activities;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. ADOPTS the programme *People and Wetlands - The Convention on Wetlands CEPA Programme*, presented in Annex 1 of this Resolution, as an instrument to provide guidance to Contracting Parties, the Secretariat of the Convention, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs), non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders in the development of appropriate actions to engage, enlist and enable people to act for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
10. ADOPTS the guidance on *The future operations of the CEPA Oversight Panel* presented in Annex 2 of the present Resolution;
11. REQUESTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to continue to monitor and report on implementation of the CEPA Programme at national and international levels, and to advise the Standing Committee and the Secretariat on CEPA work priorities;
12. URGES all Contracting Parties that have yet to do so to nominate, as a matter of priority, suitably qualified governmental and non-governmental organization Focal Points for the CEPA

Programme and to inform the Secretariat accordingly; and URGES Parties to ensure that the CEPA Focal Points are members of the National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee where these exist;

13. ENCOURAGES all Contracting Parties to: develop and implement their wetland CEPA action plans as integrated components of their broader policy instruments on environment, biodiversity, wetland and water management, education, health, and poverty reduction; and to mainstream these Plans into relevant programmes, including those at regional or local level where appropriate;
14. CALLS UPON those Contracting Parties with Wetland CEPA Action Plans to evaluate the effectiveness of those Plans on a regular basis, including how well people understand the values of wetlands, and to evaluate the challenges Contracting Parties face, and the steps they can take to conserve and use wetlands sustainably;
15. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to available resources, to assist in strengthening the capacity of the CEPA Focal Points through the provision of resources, training, toolkits and templates for CEPA activities; and URGES the Secretariat to provide technical support for CEPA National Focal Points through the establishment of a network for their knowledge sharing;
16. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue its efforts to ensure adequate resourcing of the implementation of the CEPA Programme;
17. RECOGNIZES the growing celebration of World Wetlands Day in a large number of countries; and URGES Contracting Parties to continue, or to begin, to use this occasion to bring attention to their achievements and to the continuing challenges in wetland conservation and wise use;
18. RECOGNIZES the usefulness of the Wetland City Accreditation scheme in bringing attention to the value of urban wetlands and the benefits they provide; and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote the scheme to city governments and support city governments in applying for accreditation;
19. ENCOURAGES those Contracting Parties with established, or proposed, wetland education centres and similar facilities to support the development of those centres as key places of learning and training about wetlands and wetland-related CEPA and to support their participation in global networks of such centres;
20. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to utilize and support the capacity of the Ramsar Regional Centres in wetland training, for their staff, other wetland professionals and for a wider public audience;
21. INVITES the IOPs, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and other organizations with which the Secretariat of the Convention has collaborative agreements, to support the implementation of the CEPA Programme at the global, regional, national or local levels, as appropriate, with the expertise, networks, skills and resources they have at their disposal; and REQUESTS the Convention Secretariat to provide information to these and other stakeholders to support implementation of the CEPA programme;
22. INVITES the CEPA National Focal Points and the CEPA Oversight Panel to promote synergies with the programmes of other conventions on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness, and with equivalent programmes and initiatives of other governmental and non-governmental bodies at international, regional, national and local levels;

23. INVITES Parties that have national and local languages other than the three official languages of the Convention to consider translating key Convention guidance and guidelines – and other relevant materials – into those languages in order to make the texts more widely available through, for example, the Ramsar Regional Centres; and also INVITES the IOPs and Ramsar Regional Centres to support such translations;
24. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to use the CEPA programme to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Convention; and
25. REPEALS the following Recommendations and Resolutions:
  - Recommendation 4.5 on *Education and training*;
  - Recommendation 5.8 on *Measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves*;
  - Resolution VI.19 on *Education and public awareness*;
  - Resolution VII.9 on *The Convention's Outreach Programme, 1999-2002*;
  - Resolution VIII.31 on *The Convention's Programme on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) 2003-2008*;
  - Resolution IX.18 on *Establishment of an Oversight Panel for the CEPA activities of the Convention*;
  - Resolution X.8 on *The Convention's Programme on communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2009-2015*;
  - Resolution XII.9 on *The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024*; and
  - Resolution XIV.8 on *The new CEPA approach*.

## Annex 1

### People and Wetlands - The Convention on Wetlands CEPA Programme

#### People and Wetlands

The Convention on Wetland's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) is an instrument to provide guidance to Contracting Parties, the Convention Secretariat, Convention International Organization Partners (IOPs), NGOs, community-based organizations and other stakeholders in the appropriate actions to engage, enlist and enable people to act for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

The Convention considers communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness as important tools to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan. The Convention recommends that communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness are employed in all areas and at all levels. This programme provides a set of strategies to guide the delivery of that recommendation.

The vision of the Convention on Wetland's CEPA Programme is the same as the vision of the Strategic Plan, that being "Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all". The over-arching Goal of the Convention's CEPA Programme is "People taking action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands".

#### CEPA Definitions

At its core, CEPA is about the relationship between people and wetlands and inspiring action for wetlands through the various communication and advocacy elements that constitute the acronym CEPA; **communication**, **capacity building**, **education**, **participation** and **awareness** are all processes that can be used for specific purposes and specific target audiences to deliver CEPA aims. In applying the CEPA Programme, it is important that Contracting Parties and other interest groups share a common understanding of what is meant by the concepts that underpin the acronym **communication** under the Convention on Wetlands can be defined as the interactive process between stakeholders to exchange information, knowledge and skills on the conservation and wise use of wetlands to ensure that all stakeholders are able to make informed decisions.

**Capacity building**, also referred to as **capacity development**, concerns institutional change. It is a process by which individuals, groups and organisations, institutions and countries develop, enhance and organize their systems, resources and knowledge to improve their ability, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives. Training to increase or strengthen specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that can be applied to a defined task or outcome is considered to be a part of capacity building.

**Education** in its broadest sense is a life-long learning process that can inform, motivate, and empower people to support wetland conservation, not only by fostering changes in the way that individuals, institutions, businesses and governments operate, but also by inducing lifestyle changes. It may take place in both formal and informal settings.

**Participation** is the involvement of "stakeholders" in the common development, implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Levels of involvement and kinds of participation can be highly variable, depending upon both the specific context and the decisions of the individuals, groups and institutions leading the process.

**Awareness-raising** is an agenda-setting and advocacy exercise that triggers target audiences to understand why wetland issues are important to address and what they can do to improve the situation at stake. It is a constructive and potentially catalytic force that is ultimately aimed at stimulating a target group (which could include a multitude of stakeholders) to take action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

### **Roles and responsibilities of the CEPA National Focal Points**

Each Contracting Party is to designate a CEPA Government Focal Point and a CEPA NGO Focal Point. The CEPA Government Focal Point provides leadership for the CEPA programme at the national level and serves as the point of contact on CEPA matters between the Contracting Party and the Secretariat. The CEPA NGO Focal Point engages the NGO community and can help mobilize the NGO community in support of CEPA objectives.

While it is the task of each Contracting Party to determine the precise roles and responsibilities for their nominated CEPA Government Focal Points (NFPs), general responsibilities may include to:

- provide leadership for the development and implementation of a wetland CEPA action plan at an appropriate level (national, subnational, local);
- be the main points of contact on CEPA matters between a) the Secretariat and the Contracting Party and b) between Contracting Parties;
- be key members of a National Ramsar/Wetland Committee (if such a body exists) or similar national structure;
- assist in the practical CEPA implementation at the national level and in national reporting on CEPA activities to the Conference of the Parties;
- ensure a high, positive public profile for the Convention on Wetlands and its conservation and wise use goals;
- be an active spokesperson for wetland CEPA; and
- establish and maintain any contacts, networks, structures and mechanisms necessary to ensure the effective communication of information between relevant actors at all levels and in all sectors.

While it is the task of each Contracting Party to determine the precise roles and responsibilities for their nominated CEPA NGO Focal Points (NFPs). General responsibilities may include to:

- give a voice to the NGO community in the development and implementation of a wetland CEPA action plan at an appropriate level (national, subnational, local);
- Serve as a point of contact between the Government CEPA Focal Point and the NGO community;
- assist in mobilizing the NGO community in supporting wetland CEPA including support of World Wetlands Day;
- be key members of the National Ramsar/Wetland Committees (if such a body exists) or similar national structures; and
- be an active spokesperson for wetland CEPA.

### **CEPA action plan**

A CEPA action plan outlines actions to promote coordinated communication and education between all levels of government, statutory authorities, community groups, non-government and business organizations. Specifically, a CEPA action plan identifies mechanisms for sharing knowledge, suggests

methods for building capacity, presents goals, provides links between and among people doing similar work and builds links between national and international networks. All people who are involved in wetland management and research have a role to play in communication and education for the conservation of wetlands.

All Contracting Parties are encouraged to develop a CEPA action plan in consultation with key CEPA stakeholders that identifies wetland CEPA objectives for the country, what actions need to be undertaken to achieve these objectives, which organizations and individuals need to be engaged and how success will be measured and evaluated. Examples of CEPA action plans can be found on the Convention website.

### Goals and activities

The CEPA Programme aims to achieve positive action for wetlands through nine goals and the results that should be achieved by means of identified activities. The programme covers a full range of CEPA actors but not all goals and activities apply to every Contracting Party and at every level.

Implementation of the Programme must be undertaken by a number of responsible bodies and partners of the Convention including, *inter alia*:

AA:	Administrative Authority in each country, including National Focal Points
CEPA:	Convention's CEPA National Focal Points, both government and NGO
CSO:	Civil Society Organizations such as national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs)
IOPs:	International Organization Partners, at present BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN, Wetlands International, Wetlands and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
NRC:	National Ramsar Committees / National Wetlands Committees (or equivalent bodies), where they exist
PS:	Private sector organizations whose activities directly or indirectly affect wetlands
RRC:	Ramsar Regional Centres
RRI:	Ramsar Regional Initiatives
Sec:	Secretariat of the Convention
SM:	Site managers
STRP:	Scientific and Technical Review Panel
STRP NFP:	STRP National Focal Points
WEC:	Wetland education/visitor centres
YFP:	Youth Focal Points

This is an indicative list of key stakeholders that will vary to some extent from one country to another. As a broad guide that could contribute to achieving the results, suggested implementers of each target are indicated using the abbreviations above, for example {AA}.

<b>Goal 1</b> Develop leadership to support effective implementation of the Programme by providing institutional mechanisms and establishing and supporting relevant networks.
--

- 1.1 Appropriately experienced people to fill the roles of Government and Non-governmental Organization CEPA National Focal Points (see Appendix 2) nominated by Contracting Parties and communicated to the Convention Secretariat. {AA , CSO}

- 1.2 National Ramsar/Wetland Committees established to collaborate with relevant government departments and institutions to mainstream wetlands and their ecosystem services. {AA, NRC}
- 1.3 National Focal Points (AA, CEPA and STRP) included as members of National Ramsar/Wetland Committees where these exist. {AA, NRC}
- 1.4 Relationships developed and maintained with those organizations that can support Convention objectives through their expertise, their traditional knowledge, their human resources or through funding. {Sec, AA, IOPs}
- 1.5 Development and distribution of resources on conservation and wise use including World Wetlands Day and wetland education and management. {Sec, AAs, NRC, NFPs}

<p>Goal 2 Integrate CEPA where appropriate into all levels of policy development, planning and implementation of the Convention.</p>
--

- 2.1 CEPA expertise included in the development of guidance by the Convention's bodies including the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and Standing Committee (SC). {Sec, STRP}
- 2.2 Wetland communication (CEPA) plans developed at the appropriate level by Parties (national, basin or site) to support implementers of the Convention. {AA, YFP, NRC, CSO}
- 2.3 Where appropriate, wetland CEPA integrated into national policy and planning relevant to wetlands. {AA, YFP, CEPA, NRC}

<p>Goal 3 Provide support to implementers of wise use principles, especially those with a direct role in site management.</p>
---

- 3.1 The Fifth Strategic Plan adopted by COP15 disseminated and promoted.
- 3.2 Appropriate guidance materials that support and encourage the wise use of wetlands produced for use at Wetlands of International Importance and other wetlands and by wetland networks. {Sec, STRP, IOPs, CSO}
- 3.3 Websites, including the Convention's website, to be further developed to be a useful platform for the sharing of information and resources, including the sharing of information and experiences among CEPA National Focal Points. {Sec, STRP, AA}
- 3.4 Appropriate Wetlands of International Importance and other wetlands to be celebrated as "demonstration sites" for the wise use principle, and these sites suitably equipped in terms of capacity, signage, and interpretive materials. {AA, CEPA, IOPs, CSO, STRP NFPs}
- 3.5 Secretariat requested to share CEPA stories which illustrate how implementation of CEPA can improve wetland management. {Sec}
- 3.6 Collaboration on CEPA with other Conventions, IOPs, NGOs, UN agencies and others through sharing of CEPA experiences and the encouragement of synergies. {Sec, IOPs, CSO, AA, YFP, CEPA}



Goal 4 Build the individual, institutional and collective capacity of people with a direct responsibility for Convention on Wetlands implementation.

- 4.1 Site managers supported to incorporate communication, education, participation and awareness elements into their management plans. {Sec, STRP, AA, CEPA, SM, RRCs, CSO, STRP NFP}
- 4.2 Resources provided to produce wetland management training and capacity building materials and carry out training and capacity building. {Sec, AA, CEPA, STRP, SM, RRCs, CSO, STRP NFP}
- 4.3 Partnerships with tertiary education institutions and other relevant organisations are developed to support the production and delivery of wetland management training and capacity building materials and programmes. {Sec, STRP, RRCs, CSO, PS, AA, CEPA, STRP NFP}
- 4.4 National strategic plans that strengthen the technical capacity and management of local authorities to incorporate environmental benefits and services of wetlands as strategies for local and regional development promoted. {AA, CEPA}

Goal 5 Develop and support mechanisms to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in wetland management.

- 5.1 Participation of major stakeholders and others as an effective process for selection of new Wetlands of International Importance and management of all wetlands. {AA, YFP, SM, CEPA, CSO, STRP NFP}
- 5.2 Participation in wetland management of stakeholder groups with cultural, spiritual, customary, traditional, historical and socio-economic links to wetlands or those communities who depend on wetlands for their livelihoods is given a high priority. {AA, YFP, SM, CEPA, CSO, RRI}
- 5.3 The use of practices and traditional knowledge systems that embody appropriate wetland cultural management by indigenous peoples and local communities recovered, strengthened and encouraged. {AA, CEPA}
- 5.4 Encourage community participation in wetlands through volunteer programmes which support the delivery of management objectives. {AA, YFP, SM, CSO}
- 5.5 Relationships with the private sector are sought and developed, including non-traditional sectors and those sectors whose activities have a major impact on wise use of wetlands. {AA, NRC, SM, PS}

Goal 6 Implement programmes, projects and campaigns targeting diverse sectors of society to increase awareness, appreciation and understanding of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide.

- 6.1 Wide-reaching programmes, projects and campaigns, including World Wetlands Day, undertaken with diverse partners to raise awareness, build community support, and

promote stewardship approaches and attitudes towards wetlands, in particular through the use of social media. {Sec, AA, YFP, NRC, CEPA, SM, IOPs, RRCs, PS, CSO}

- 6.2 Awareness enhanced on the monetary and non-monetary values of wetlands and their ecosystem services to improve understanding of the benefits which wetlands provide. {Sec, STRP, AA, CEPA, SM, STRP NFP}
- 6.3 Photo libraries, promotional videos and other similar tools developed and/or maintained to support awareness raising and appreciation of wetlands and their ecosystem services. {Sec, AA, CEPA}
- 6.4 Collaboration with the media, including social media, carried out to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands and recognition of their ecosystem services to decision makers, key wetland users and the broad public. {Sec, AA, CEPA}
- 6.5 Wetland City Accreditation scheme is promoted, and cities encouraged to seek accreditation. Accredited Wetland Cities are acknowledged and celebrated as an example of wetland protection and wise use to encourage other cities to take positive actions for wetlands.

Goal 7	Recognize and support the role of wetland centres and other environmental centres as catalysts and key actors for activities that promote Convention objectives.
--------	--

- 7.1 Wetland education/interpretation or visitor centres and similar facilities established in all countries as resources permit. {AA, IOPs, WEC}
- 7.2 Wetland education/visitor centres linked nationally and internationally through global mechanisms and national expertise in CEPA, to share experience and resources, for example through the Wetland Link International (WLI) programme of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, WWT (UK) and other initiatives. {AA, CEPA, WEC}
- 7.3 Partnerships established with other education centres that could play a role in promoting wetlands and Convention objectives. {AA, CEPA, RRCs, WEC}

Goal 8	Support the development and distribution of education materials that build awareness of ecosystem values and services and the value of wetlands for use in formal education settings, at Wetlands of International Importance and by all Convention stakeholders.
--------	---

- 8.1 Wetland education materials that build awareness of the values of wetlands and their ecosystem services developed, promoted and distributed among relevant target audiences. {STRP, AA, YFP, CEPA, WEC, STRP NFP}
- 8.2 Tertiary education institutions, especially those with water and wetland programmes, contribute to the production of targeted wetland education materials. {STRP, AA, CEPA, WEC}
- 8.3 Cultural and traditional wetland knowledge and practices are incorporated into wetland education materials. {WEC, CEPA}
- 8.4 Key messages about wetlands and their ecosystem services regularly reviewed through dialogue and feedback with all Convention stakeholders. {Sec, AA, YFP}.

Goal 9 Guidance and information provided by the STRP is developed in collaboration with the CEPA programme and dissemination to identified target audiences is achieved through the most effective communications channels.

- 9.1 A series of information fact sheets developed based on identified and agreed large-scale questions as key awareness raising outreach tools. {Sec, STRP}.
- 9.2 The Ramsar Briefing Notes and Ramsar Technical Reports developed and disseminated as pragmatic, working advisory documents targeting policy-makers or wetland practitioners and to ensure consistency and Convention branding. {Sec, STRP}

## **Annex 2**

### **The future operations of the CEPA Oversight Panel**

The Convention on Wetland's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) is an instrument to provide guidance to Contracting Parties, the Convention Secretariat, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations and other stakeholders in the appropriate actions to engage, enlist and enable people to act for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

The main role of the CEPA Oversight Panel is to oversee preparation and implementation of CEPA within the Convention and in particular to advise the Standing Committee and the Secretariat on national and international CEPA activities, including the CEPA priorities of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP). Specific functions include:

- i. delivering results originating from specific CEPA requests included in Resolutions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) and the Strategic Plan;
- ii. examining CEPA needs and gaps in implementation in order to identify CEPA activities to be integrated into the Strategic Plan;
- iii. monitoring and reporting on current CEPA issues within the Convention and the progress of implementation of current CEPA priorities, especially with reference to the CEPA activities included in the Strategic Plan as well as COP Resolutions; and
- iv. liaising with other multilateral environmental agreements to improve CEPA synergies among Conventions.

This document on the operations of the Panel aims to provide guidance on its operations to provide greater clarity and enable the Panel to operate more effectively and efficiently. This document takes account of the instructions and guidance provided by relevant Resolutions, Decisions of the Standing Committee and recommendations of the current and past Panels.

#### Membership of the Panel

As CEPA activities are diverse and require a range of expertise, diversity of expertise should be reflected in the composition of the Panel. The Panel should have balanced representation from all regions of the Convention. To ensure institutional memory, it is recommended that the membership of the Panel should always include at least one person who has served as a Panel member during the previous triennium. The Panel may invite additional CEPA experts as required.

The membership of the Panel should include:

- i. The Chair or Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee;
- ii. Two national CEPA Government Focal Points;
- iii. Two CEPA NGO Focal Points;
- iv. STRP Vice-Chair (or STRP representative);
- v. One representative of the International Organization Partners, who is selected to act as the liaison between the Panel and the six IOPs;
- vi. A youth representative;
- vii. A representative of Indigenous Peoples;

- viii. Contracting Parties (one per region separate from any regional representation from the members listed above); and
- ix. A representative of the Secretariat of the Convention (*ex officio*).

#### Nomination procedure

The process for nomination of members is as follows:

- During the regional meetings that take place at the last full meeting of the Standing Committee before each meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), the Parties are informed of the membership of the CEPA Oversight Panel and are encouraged to identify potential interested and qualified members.
- Four months in advance of the COP, the Secretariat issues a call for nominations to all Contracting Parties for the following categories:
  - CEPA Government Focal Point;
  - CEPA NGO Focal Point;
  - Indigenous Peoples' representative; and
  - Youth representative.
- Four months in advance of the COP, the Secretariat invites IOPs to select a representative to jointly represent IOPs on the Panel.
- During regional meetings at the COP, each region identifies a Contracting Party from the region as a member of the Panel.
- At the first meeting of the Standing Committee immediately after the COP, the Standing Committee agrees on the Contracting Party representatives from each region to be members of the Oversight Panel. The regional representatives and the Chair of the Panel (the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee) will meet intersessionally following the Standing Committee meeting to review a summary prepared by the Secretariat of the nominations received for the CEPA Government Focal Point, CEPA NGO Focal Point, Indigenous Peoples' representative and Youth representative categories. The regional representatives and the Chair review the nominations and prepare a list of recommended membership of the Oversight Panel, with an alternative for each position in case of non-endorsement of the primary recommendation. The list is provided to the Standing Committee for endorsement. The Secretariat informs the Parties of the membership.
- Within two months of the end of each COP, the CEPA Oversight Panel holds its first meeting, to select its Vice-Chair and begin the development of its work plan for the triennium in accordance with the instructions received from the COP.

#### Modus operandi

- i. The main working language of the Panel is English. Reports of the CEPA Oversight Panel to the Standing Committee will be translated into the official languages of the Convention.
- ii. The Panel will operate as far as possible through electronic means (email, video meetings, collaborative online tools, etc.). If it is thought necessary, and if funding permits, the Panel may seek to meet face-to-face.

- iii. The Panel will report on its activities at each meeting of the Standing Committee.
- iv. The CEPA Government Focal Point representatives and the NGO CEPA Focal Points on the Panel should, as far as possible, and as necessary, consult with and seek input from their counterparts.
- v. Oversight Panel members who represent governments are encouraged to join established working groups of the Convention to contribute CEPA knowledge and expertise to the work plans of the groups.

#### Towards a more strategic, integrated and effective CEPA programme

In seeking to ensure that the needs of the CEPA programme are fulfilled, the CEPA Oversight Panel will prepare an action plan clearly linked to the Strategic Plan that will lead to a more strategic, integrated and effective CEPA Programme. Proposed actions include:

- i. Strengthening the CEPA Focal Point network; the CEPA Oversight Panel should continue to review how the CEPA Focal Point network is supported, and make recommendations to strengthen the network through improved communication, information sharing and capacity building.
- ii. Preparation of a guide to roles and responsibilities for CEPA Focal Points; the Secretariat, in consultation with the Oversight Panel, will produce a digital brochure on the roles and responsibilities of CEPA Government and NGO Focal Points.
- iii. Preparation of updated CEPA guidance; the Secretariat will develop guidance for CEPA Focal Points to replace the outdated 2010 Handbook on Wetland CEPA.
- iv. Training and information sharing for CEPA Focal Points; the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Oversight Panel, will prepare a training webinar for Government and NGO Focal Points. The webinar will be delivered in the official languages of the Convention, with a recording of the webinar available on the CEPA section of the Convention website.
- v. Reporting on select CEPA activities and achievements identified in the National Report form, through inclusion of the CEPA activities in the new National Report form to be developed following the adoption in the Fifth Strategic Plan of a set of indicators to monitor and evaluate CEPA implementation at the national level.
- vi. Preparation of a list of Convention resources that support CEPA implementation; the Secretariat will make available, in the CEPA section of the Convention website, links to resources that support implementation of CEPA.