



"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link"
**7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999**

Information document

**The inclusion of Israel in the Asia Region
under the Ramsar Convention**

Background

1. Resolution 3.3 of Ramsar COP3 held in 1987 established the Standing Committee of the Convention, and for the purpose of the composition of the Committee it was also decided that Ramsar Contracting Parties should be grouped into the seven regions that have been operating in the Convention ever since.
2. The practice of the Ramsar Bureau has been to automatically assign new countries that join the Convention to one of these regions, according to the geographical location of the country. The accession of Israel to the Convention in 1997 gave rise to a challenge of this Ramsar Bureau practice by the Islamic Republic of Iran (Alternate Representative in the Standing Committee for the Asia Region), at the 20th meeting of the Standing Committee in 1997.
3. As a consequence, the Standing Committee decided to initiate a process of revision of the regionalization arrangements under the Convention. The results of this process is reflected in Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.1 entitled "Regional categorization of countries under the Convention, and composition, roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee, including tasks of Standing Committee members".
4. Pending a decision on this matter by Ramsar COP7, and in the absence of instructions to the contrary by the Standing Committee, in its capacity as the only decision-making mechanism in the Convention between meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the Ramsar Bureau has continued to treat Israel as a Contracting Party in the Asia region and to assign new countries joining the Convention to the existing seven regions.
5. On this basis, Israel was invited by the Ramsar Bureau to participate in the Ramsar Pan-Asian Regional Meeting held in Manila on 22-24 February 1999. The participation of Israel at the meeting was challenged, and the meeting decided that the delegation of Israel should leave the meeting. The section of the minutes of the meeting dealing with this issue, as approved by the meeting, is distributed in the attachment as a Ramsar COP7 document at the request of the Pan-Asian Regional meeting. This information document should assist Contracting Parties in preparing their position with respect to the proposal on regionalization contained in Ramsar COP7 Doc 15.1.

**Extract of the Minutes of the Pan-Asian Regional Meeting
of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
February 1999, Manila, Philippines**

First Day, 22 February 1999

Agenda Item 1: Official Opening - Welcoming Statements

1. **Mr Teodoro B. Pison**, Undersecretary for Legal and Legislative Affairs, Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines, delivered the message of His Excellency Joseph Estrada, President of the Republic of the Philippines, to the meeting. In his message the President reaffirmed the commitment of his government to the conservation of the varied and valuable wetlands in the country. He stressed the need for cooperation among nations and harmonisation of initiatives under the different environment-related conventions.
2. **Mr Cheah Kong Wai**, Regional Representative for Asia, expressed his appreciation to the government of the Philippines for kindly providing the venue for this meeting. He drew attention to the importance of the meeting as an opportunity to discuss issues of particular interest to the Asia region in preparation for the 7th Conference of Parties. He drew particular attention to the fact that Asia, despite being the largest region under the Convention, has nominated relatively few sites to the Ramsar List.
3. **Mr Delmar Blasco**, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention Bureau, which extended the invitations to this meeting, outlined the new developments within the Convention, and drew attention to the various tools being developed to assist member countries in the implementation of the Convention. He reported that a preliminary analysis of the national reports for COP7 revealed a significant gap in actions taken to promote regional and international cooperation among countries in the Asia region, and urged the meeting to give due consideration to addressing this limitation in their deliberations. He expressed gratitude to the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) for having provided the funding to enable this meeting to be convened.
4. **Dr Hans Friederich**, IUCN, speaking on behalf of the four Ramsar Partners, reaffirmed the commitment of the Partners to advancing the cause of wetland conservation and wise use, and their strong support for the Convention. The Partners, working in coordination with the secretariat, are well placed to provide regional and national level support for the implementation of the Convention. He expressed concern for the continuing degradation and loss of inter-tidal and coastal habitats and the degradation of catchment areas, and stressed the need to take an integrated approach to the management of rivers. He called on Asian member countries to consider the designation of further sites to the Ramsar List, and on non-member countries to take steps to join the Convention.

Agenda Item 2: Plenary Session A: Introductory Session

Election of the Meeting Chair and Vice Chairs

5. Malaysia was unanimously elected to Chair the meeting in its capacity as Regional Representative for Asia to the Ramsar Standing Committee.
6. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Philippines were unanimously elected as Vice Chairs of the meeting.

Agenda Item 3: General introduction to the meeting

7. **Malaysia (the Meeting Chair)** stated that the Pan-Asian Regional Meeting afforded the opportunity for the Asian region to consult on issues of importance to the region and to arrive at positions to present to the 7th Conference of the Contracting Parties. It allows the opportunity for the members of the region to identify issues of interest and areas of concern, and come up with a common position. He regretted the fact that the meeting did not take place earlier as was planned, but felt that, on the other hand, it offered the members an opportunity to review documents prepared for COP7. The Chair further noted that this meeting could forward recommendations to COP7, but had no decision-making powers. However, he noted that if the meeting reached consensus or a majority view in certain areas, the COP would have to take this into account. He urged the meeting to work towards a common position on the various issues or, alternatively, suggest how the issue should be presented from the region to the relevant authority, be it COP or otherwise. The Chair drew attention to the request from the Russian Federation to be afforded Permanent Observer status at meetings of the Asian region, and asked members to deliberate on this request and to return to the discussion about this during the concluding session on Day 3.

Agenda Item 4: Adoption of the Agenda

8. The proposed agenda was adopted by consensus.

Agenda Item 5: Appointment of the recommendations drafting group

9. **The Chair** proposed that the recommendations drafting group comprise the Chairs of the four thematic sessions, the Ramsar Bureau and a representative of the Ramsar Partners.
10. **Islamic Republic of Iran** thanked the Government of the Philippines for providing the venue for the meeting. He expressed the opinion that since a discussion on membership in the Asian region was to take place during this meeting, it cannot allow for the participation of members whose membership in the region has been challenged and is under consideration. He suggested that the Chair convene a closed meeting of the Contracting Parties in the Asian region to deliberate on this matter. In response to the Chair's remarks, he stated that the Asian group had decision-making powers with regards its membership. He stressed that one of the objectives of regionalisation is to promote regional cooperation, and by having a member whose membership has been challenged, this cooperation could not be realized.
11. **The Chair** sought clarification on the definition of a closed meeting and drew attention to the fact that nowhere is it officially recorded what the membership of each Ramsar region is. To

his knowledge, and largely for the purposes of administration, the Ramsar Convention recognises seven regions, but there is no established list for each region. He recognised that the practice of the Ramsar Bureau was to automatically allocate any new Contracting Party to a particular region based on geographical or biogeographical reasons. He reiterated that in the absence of a previous decision on listing of countries in a particular region, he failed to see how this meeting could decide on the composition of a closed meeting.

12. **Syria** supported the position of the I.R. of Iran, explaining that while no precedent has been set in this group, precedents exist in other Asian fora. He further explained that procedurally, the Asian group had to discuss and decide on this before the meeting could proceed.
13. **Pakistan** stated that this was a vital issue and supported the suggestion of the I.R. of Iran and Syria for a closed session.
14. **Jordan** supported the suggestion of the I.R. of Iran, Syria and Pakistan for a closed session of the meeting involving members of the Asian group.
15. **Philippines** noted the importance of the issue to the Asian region, and wished to convey the position of the Philippine government that the question of regionalisation under Ramsar should be left to the COP to consider. It also made an appeal to all Contracting Parties attending this meeting to support this position.
16. **Japan** supported the Philippines' position and urged the meeting to respect Decision SC 21.2 of the Standing Committee which determined to forward for consideration by COP7 the proposed draft decision on regional categorisation.
17. **Sri Lanka** stated that the Convention was about the conservation of wetlands and expressed regret that there was discussion of other issues. He felt that the reasons leading to the present situation had been clearly explained and suggested that for the purposes of this meeting, geographical boundaries should be considered in making a decision on membership.
18. **Bahrain** expressed support for the position of the I.R. of Iran, with reference to the procedures adopted by other environment-related treaties.
19. **India** expressed the view that the issue of which country should go to which region is a matter for consideration by COP. She explained that they did not have the necessary competence to decide on regional categorisation. She further noted that since the Standing Committee draft resolution was one which affected the whole world, it is a fit subject to be discussed by the COP.
20. **Nepal** expressed support for the statement by the delegate from India.
21. **I.R. of Iran** pointed out that there were two points being discussed - the first being the participation of non-members in meetings of the Asian group, and the second, the draft proposal for COP7 on regional categorisation. He noted that there was no legal basis for accepting countries whose membership is under consideration as a member of the Asian

group in Ramsar, and reiterated his call for a closed session of existing members to decide on the application of membership by a particular country. He went on to cite examples of where this has occurred in other fora.

22. **The Secretary General** explained that there was no procedure whereby countries submit requests for placement in a particular region, rather that it was the practice of the Ramsar Bureau to assign countries to a particular region on their accession to the Convention. This practice has been challenged and the decision of the 21st Standing Committee meeting on the matter was that the issue be transmitted to COP7 for consideration. He pointed out that while this issue remains unresolved, membership of all countries in all regions has been affected.
23. **I.R. of Iran** could not concur with the Secretary General's interpretation and noted that at the Asian regional level, the meeting had the necessary competence to make a decision. The objective of this meeting was to discuss matters of importance to the Asian region and to provide regional input to COP7 agenda items. He further noted that while he agreed any decision on the draft proposal could only be taken by the COP, the Asian region should provide input to that decision-making process by reflecting the views of the meeting on participation of non-members in the Asian group.
24. **Syria** stated that this was the main issue on which the members of the region had to take a decision or make a recommendation, by consensus in a closed session. He could not accept this as a *fait accompli* and as representatives of governments he felt that they had the right to raise these issues as per the Rules of Procedure in other fora.
25. **Pakistan** noted the need to take a decision regarding membership of the Asian group or render the adoption of the agenda null and void.
26. **The Chair**, in summarising the discussions, noted that there were dissenting views on the question of membership of the Asian region. He expressed the opinion that it would be difficult to convene a closed session of Asian group while the issue of membership of the group remained unresolved, and he suggested that the issue be left to COP to decide on the basis of the paper on regional categorisation. He recognised that the question regarding participation raised by the I.R. of Iran was paramount, and had to be addressed before the meeting could proceed. He went on to invite suggestions from the floor on how the meeting could proceed to come up with a position on this issue.
27. **I.R. of Iran** drew attention to the fact that this meeting provided the opportunity to make recommendations or a decision on this issue and urged the meeting to consider the issue in the light of promoting implementation of the Convention at regional level. The Asian group needed to provide advice from the region to facilitate the deliberations at COP. He reiterated his call for a closed session to decide on participation. He elaborated on the practice of regional groups everywhere to take decisions based on consensus on their membership and explained that agreement on membership had to be unanimous. He further noted that the decision could not be put to the vote because it stood as long as one member of the group raised an objection to the membership of another country. He reiterated his call for a closed

session as a legitimate right of a government representative, to discuss the membership of the Asian group.

28. **Thailand** expressed support for the opinions stated by the Philippines and Japan and urged the meeting to note the request of the Philippines that this matter be deferred.
29. **The Chair** expressed the opinion that the meeting had to reach a decision on how to proceed. He noted that the membership of one country in the Asian group has been challenged and remains unresolved.
30. **The Chair** decided to adjourn the session in order to confer informally with the Vice Chairs and the Bureau first, and then with other groupings of countries in order to find a solution to the impasse.

Second Day, 23 February 1999 (morning session)

31. **The Chair**, in reporting back on the informal consultations he held with the Vice Chairs, the Ramsar Bureau, and all Contracting Party delegations the previous day, stated that a proposed formulation to resolve this issue was discussed but eventually rejected. Additional consultations were held with each Contracting Party, which revealed the following three differing views: (1) objections to the participation of certain Contracting Parties in this meeting; (2) agreement to abide by the majority decision of the group; and (3) that the issue of regional categorisation should be deferred to the COP. This being the case, he concluded that there was no consensus among the Contracting Parties on this issue. The Chair went on to say that in his opinion, the objection raised was still in a very general form with no specific reference having been made to indicate the Contracting Party whose participation in this meeting is being questioned. In order to ensure that the objection is clearly understood, he called on those Contracting Parties with objections regarding the participation of other Contracting Parties to clarify their position.
32. **I.R of Iran** noted the efforts of the Chair in trying to find a resolution to this issue and asked that the Chair present a more detailed report of the findings of his informal consultations.
33. **The Chair** responded that in his view he had already presented the findings of his informal consultations in the form of the three categories of opinions referred to earlier. He again called on the Contracting Parties to state their specific objections.
34. **I.R. of Iran** responded by saying that in their view the Chair was in a position to report back on the specific objections from the detailed consultations of the previous day.
35. **The Chair** reiterated that in his view he had already presented his report to the meeting.
36. **Jordan** noted that it was a mistake to have issued an invitation to Israel to participate in this meeting without consulting the other Contracting Parties in the region. It was their feeling that

the majority of the countries in the Asian region object to Israel's participation. Jordan therefore proposed that Israel be asked to leave the meeting.

37. **I.R. of Iran** explained that as long as one objection to membership was raised, then the membership of the affected Party should be rejected. He equated this with the procedure adopted during Day One on the election of the Meeting Chair and Vice Chairs. I.R. of Iran explained that it had raised objections to Israel's membership in the Asian group during both the 20th and 21st meetings of the Ramsar Standing Committee. In spite of its objection, an invitation was issued to Israel to participate in this meeting. In the view of the I.R. of Iran, the participation of Israel in this meeting is illegitimate. He reiterated that in other environment-related conventions, Israel is not included in the Asian group. He believed that the act of raising the objection to Israel's participation in this meeting constituted a decision to that effect by the meeting.
38. **The Chair** asked if Contracting Parties agreed with the I.R. of Iran's interpretation that only one objection would suffice to nullify the membership of a given country. He recorded that Bahrain, Bangladesh, Indonesia, I.R. of Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan and Syria had indicated their agreement with the interpretation of the I.R. of Iran.
39. **Thailand** made a point of clarification to ask if the meeting was being asked to take a vote on this issue.
40. **Philippines** made a point of clarification to ask if the question proposed by the Chair constitutes a vote and, if so, then the Philippines would not want to be associated with that activity. He went on to reiterate the position expressed earlier, that the decision should be deferred to the COP.
41. **Thailand** concurred with the view and position of the Philippines.
42. **The Chair** explained that in the absence of any formal procedure to provide guidance for the running of this meeting, he could only infer that decisions had to be arrived at by consensus. He welcomed suggestions from the floor on how to advance discussions on this issue.
43. **I.R. of Iran** reiterated that in his view the practice, in written form or otherwise, is that if a single objection is raised to the participation of a member then their participation is not allowed. He stated that the views expressed by the Philippines and Thailand did not have any bearing on this discussion and should be addressed under the relevant agenda item. The issue being discussed at this time was about membership in the Asian group and, in his opinion, the decision is clear and should be adhered to.
44. **The Chair** sought the response of the Contracting Parties to the statement by the I.R. of Iran that as long as one member objects to the participation of the country concerned, then the country concerned should not be allowed to participate.
45. **Japan** stated that it would like to hear from the Party whose participation was being questioned.

46. **I.R. of Iran** drew attention to the fact that there had been no objection raised to the question posed by the Chair and, given that, the meeting should proceed without the presence of Israel.
47. **Japan** reiterated its desire to hear from the Party whose participation was being questioned.
48. **I.R. of Iran** made a point of order that the Chair had sought the response of the meeting to the proposal raised by the I.R. of Iran and received no objection. The I.R. of Iran understood this to indicate agreement to its proposal. It was therefore improper for the Chair to give the floor to the Party whose participation has been objected to. It was the view of the I.R. of Iran that a decision on this issue has been taken and should therefore be followed.
49. **Thailand** stated that it did not have the mandate to make a decision on this matter and therefore chose to remain silent, but stressed that this should not be construed as either support or opposition.
50. **The Chair** explained that the I.R. of Iran had made the objection and stated that one objection was sufficient to request that the Party whose participation is objected to should leave. The Chair had sought objections from the meeting to the statement of the I.R. of Iran and had not received any objection.
51. **Japan** questioned the view that one objection was sufficient to make a decision to ask the Party whose participation is objected to to leave the meeting and sought clarification about the Terms of Reference to which this corresponds in the absence of Terms of Reference for this meeting.
52. **The Secretary General** explained that only two sets of Rules of Procedure exist under the Convention - one for the COP and the other for the Standing Committee. In his opinion the Rules of Procedure for the COP are most applicable *mutatis mutandis* to this meeting. Even so, they do not address the specific issue being discussed here.
53. **I.R. of Iran** reiterated that since no objections had been raised, it meant that a decision had been taken.
54. **Republic of Korea** suggested that the meeting make an exception and allow Israel to take the floor.
55. **Jordan** objected to the suggestion put forward by the Republic of Korea.
56. **Japan** supported the suggestion put forward by the Republic of Korea.
57. **The Chair** understood that the I.R. of Iran's proposal, that a single objection put forward by a member means that the Party being objected to has to leave, has received no objection from the meeting, and therefore requested that the delegation of Israel leave the meeting.
58. **Japan** reiterated the call for Israel to be given the floor.

59. **I.R. of Iran** reiterated that since there was no objection to their proposal, the decision had been taken.
60. **Japan** stated that it chose not to make a decision at this time because the issue of the participation of Israel is irrelevant to the decision on regionalisation.
61. **Jordan** noted that a clear decision had been made to adopt the proposal put forward by the I.R. of Iran and asked that the meeting proceed with the agenda.
62. **The Chair** referred to the fact that no objection had been raised to the proposal by the I.R. of Iran at this time, although some Parties chose not to participate in the discussion. The Chair's understanding was that there was no objection to the I.R. of Iran's proposal not to accept the participation of Israel in the Pan-Asian Regional Meeting and repeated his request to Israel to leave the meeting.
63. **India** stated its intention to abstain from expressing any view at this time.
64. **Sri Lanka** explained that it was not in a position to take a decision at this time without advice from its government.
65. **Nepal** supported the sentiments expressed by India and Sri Lanka.
66. **Philippines** did not object to the ruling of the Chair in response to the objection of the I.R. of Iran, that Israel not be allowed to attend this meeting in Manila, because it was premature to decide on the composition of the Asian Group until the COP7 meeting in Costa Rica in May 1999. Accordingly, the Chair's ruling is not final and permanent until otherwise confirmed by the COP7.
67. The meeting adjourned for a short period and reconvened without the presence of the Israeli delegation, and proceeded to consider Agenda Item 6.

Agenda Item 6: Plenary Session B: 7th Conference of Parties, Costa Rica, May 1999

68. **The Secretary General** introduced the List of Documents for COP7 and drew attention to several which have particular relevance at regional and national level. He urged all member countries to give particular attention to the Draft Proposal on Regional Categorisation under the Convention and seek competent advice on the proposal before COP7.
69. **The Chair** expressed the view that the region needed to take a strong stand on its position with regards the proposed options.
70. **Bahrain** suggested that the decisions of the Pan-Asian Regional Meeting be transmitted to COP7.

71. **India** stressed that the only decision which had been taken was that of Israel leaving the meeting. The decision on regional categorisation would have to be decided at COP7.
72. **The Secretary General** expressed his sense that many participants have not been briefed on this issue by the relevant national authorities.
73. **Syria** recalled that during the opening session, both the Secretary General and the Chair had stated that the main task for this meeting is to facilitate discussions at COP7. He noted that the decision on the non-participation of Israel in this meeting had been taken. He went on to state that they were fully mandated and authorised by their governments to make a decision on the issues being discussed at this meeting. He suggested that the basis on which the decision was taken to ask Israel to leave the meeting be reflected in the meeting report to facilitate discussions at COP7.
74. **India** reiterated that this meeting is not competent to decide on regional categorisation and could not make a decision which affects the whole world. India will seek advice at national level prior to the COP.
75. **I.R. of Iran** stated that it was prepared to discuss the draft proposal on regional categorisation but urged the meeting not to confuse the discussion on regional categorisation with the decision taken to ask Israel to leave the meeting.
76. **The Secretary General** drew the attention of the meeting to the sections of the draft proposal which require particular attention.
77. **India** sought clarification on the reasons for addressing the issue of regional categorisation.
78. **The Secretary General** explained that it was the objection raised by the I.R. of Iran to the placement of Israel in the Asia region which led to the decision by the Standing Committee to review the issue of regionalization under the Convention.
79. **Jordan** was in favour of the alternative option in the draft proposal, put forward by the I.R. of Iran, and asked if there had been any reaction from the Western European region to this alternative option.
80. **The Secretary General** explained that while he had not received any specific reaction regarding the placement of Israel in the Western Europe and Others Group, it was his sense that some countries have objections to their placement in this group.
81. **Jordan** is convinced that Arab countries will have a problem with the option put forward by the Chair of the Standing Committee for the inclusion of Israel in the Asian group.
82. **Syria** voiced its full support for the alternative proposal put forward by the I.R. of Iran as it would avoid complications in the future.
83. **Bahrain** also expressed support for the alternative proposal suggested by the I.R. of Iran.

84. **Pakistan** endorsed the alternative proposal put forward by the I.R. of Iran and noted that Israel's placement in the Asian region makes it eligible to be represented on the Standing Committee which may cause difficulties in terms of working together.
85. **The Secretary General** pointed out that the COP will recognise that there are a number of Asian countries which oppose Israel's placement in the Asian region. However, he foresees a possible objection from a number of countries with regards the composition of the Western Europe and Others Group. He urged the meeting to consider other arrangements to resolve this problem.
86. **I.R. of Iran** took the floor to explain the circumstances which led to the review of regional categorisation under the Convention. He expressed the view that the decision which had been taken by the Pan-Asian meeting was a clear and strong message to COP and one which should be taken into account in the decision on regional categorisation.
87. **The Secretary General** suggested that a creative alternative to the UN model be found because in his view, adopting the UN model would not be beneficial for the Ramsar Convention. He urged the meeting to remain open to alternatives.
88. **I.R. of Iran** stated that their proposal is the only one at present which responds to the concerns of Asian countries. Therefore they could not accept the first alternative in the draft resolution, which has not considered these concerns. The I.R. of Iran remains open to other proposals which fully take into account the concerns of the Asian countries.
89. **Malaysia** recognised that Ramsar is a technical convention but expressed the view that the current categorisation is not conducive to promoting regional cooperation. It would therefore only support a proposal which does not include Israel in the Asian group, such as the one proposed by the I.R. of Iran.
90. **The Chair** understood that the interventions offered by the meeting implied that a proposal which did not include Israel in the Asian group would be acceptable.
91. **Japan** urged the Chair not to take this to mean that the Pan-Asian Regional Meeting reached consensus that Israel should be excluded from the Asian group.
92. **India** wished to reiterate its suggestion that any decision on the issue of regional categorisation be deferred to COP.
93. **The Secretary General** confirmed that all interventions offered during the course of this meeting would be duly recorded in the report of the meeting.
94. **Thailand** agreed that a creative alternative to the one proposed by the I.R. of Iran should be sought and reminded the meeting not to confuse the decision to ask Israel to leave this meeting with that of their placement with regards the regional categorisation. Thailand would not be prepared to support any decision on regional categorisation at this meeting.

95. **The Secretary General** reminded the meeting about the deadline for submission of draft proposals for COP7 but urged the meeting to consider the option of introducing a third alternative to the existing draft proposal.
96. **Philippines** wished to reaffirm, for the record, its position that the issue of regional categorisation, which did not originally figure in the provisional agenda for the meeting, should be submitted to COP7 for consideration.
97. **Japan** expressed support for the Philippine position.
98. **I.R. of Iran** wished to state for the record that in its view the decision taken by the meeting not to allow Israel to participate as a member of the Asian group is a strong and clear message to COP. The I.R. of Iran remains ready to discuss any other proposals which give due consideration to the concerns expressed by the Asian group.
99. **Thailand** reaffirmed its position that this issue should be dealt with at COP7.
100. **The Secretary General** went on to introduce several other draft proposals for COP7. He pointed out that bilateral and multilateral development assistance agencies are the most important source of funds for the SGF, which reinforces the need for the Convention to enhance links with these agencies.
101. **I.R. of Iran** suggested that more information be provided in the document on the disbursement of SGF funds by region, to assist in the deliberations. Further, that the procedure for granting funds should not include consideration of the political and economic conditions of countries, which in the I.R. of Iran's view is beyond the ability of the Bureau. He suggested that paragraph 13 of the draft proposal be modified to reflect this.
102. **Jordan** felt that the criteria for determining funded proposals should be defined because at present there does not seem to be fair distribution of funds across the regions.
103. **I.R. of Iran** commented that the guidelines for developing and implementing national wetland policies should consider and suggest mechanisms to address the technological, technical and financial needs of the countries. There is also a need to consider emerging issues which indirectly impact on wetlands. The I.R. of Iran will consider submitting a draft proposal on risk assessment to COP7 to reflect these concerns.
104. **The Secretary General** suggested that these concerns could be reflected in the draft guidelines on international cooperation and encouraged countries to consider introducing amendments to existing draft proposals where possible, so as to avoid having a large number of individual proposals for consideration during COP7. He proceeded to report on progress with regards preparations for COP7.
105. **The Chair**, in the absence of further interventions, adjourned the session.