

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
10th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel,
Gland, Switzerland, 27-29 June 2001

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Report of the meeting

AGENDA ITEM 1: Welcoming remarks

1. The **Chair of Standing Committee**, Stephen Hunter, welcomed the participants and noted that the 26th meeting of Standing Committee (SC26), in December 2001, will be the last before the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP8) in November 2002. Thus he emphasized the desirability of having as many STRP outputs ready in time for consideration by SC26 as possible – for those products which cannot be ready, there will be a meeting of the SC Subgroup on COP8 in May 2002 which can give approval to last-minute COP8 agenda papers. He also stressed the importance of preparing guidance papers that can be read and digested by COP's busy delegates, neither too long nor too discursive and requiring as few amendments as possible. On behalf of both Standing Committee and the COP, he expressed gratitude to the STRP for the members' good will and hard work on behalf of the Convention.

2. The **Secretary General (SG)**, Delmar Blasco, welcomed the participants and briefed them on the status of the Convention, 124 Contracting Parties (CPs) and two more for which notification is awaited. With increasing numbers of Ramsar sites, the Bureau needs frequently to follow up news of potentially harmful developments (which are often communicated by NGOs, illustrating the key role that the NGO community plays in monitoring Ramsar sites); the Bureau then makes inquiries with the governments and requests action, and there have been good results in some but not all cases. The SG drew attention to the Bureau's active involvement in the World Summit on Sustainable Development Rio+10 process at the UNEP and UN level, in order to ensure that Ramsar is seen by WSSD as a useful tool for sustainable development. Funding is a key problem, not for the Bureau but for wetland work generally, particularly in developing countries – the message to be conveyed to WSSD is that the instruments (not only Ramsar but the other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, MEAs, as well) are already in place and need adequate resourcing to be successful.

3. The SG observed that the STRP's contribution is a key component. Ramsar is known as a 'serious convention', based upon sound science, and it is the STRP that provides that science. He suggested that guidance approved by SC26 in December 2001 should be circulated informally to the Parties through March 2001 for a first round of comment, since there are many new and complex issues, for final approval by the Subgroup on COP8 in May and subsequent formal circulation to the CPs as COP agenda papers.

4. The **Chair of the STRP**, Dr Jorge Jiménez, reiterated the hope that most products would be ready by the September deadline for consideration by SC26 in December, and he invited the Working Groups (WGs), when reporting on their progress, also to describe what is needed for completion in that time period. He expressed pleasure at seeing representatives of other conventions and bodies participating, which shows progress in tangible coordination amongst the MEAs.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Adoption of the agenda

5. The proposed agenda was adopted. **The Deputy Secretary General (DSG)**, Dr Nick Davidson, conveyed apologies from members and observers unable to attend the meeting: STRP members Angel Alcalá and Mohammad Shatanawi, Jan Plesnik of CBD's SBSTTA, Tore Söderqvist of the Global Wetlands Economics Network (GWEN), Jo Treweek of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA), Ivica Trumbic of UNEP's PAP/RAC-Mediterranean Action Plan, Jean-Bernard Lachavanne of the International Association of Limnology, Biksham Gujja of WWF International, and Colin Galbraith of CMS's Scientific Council.

AGENDA ITEM 3, "Expected products of the meeting", is covered by the notes to each Agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Provisional agenda and programme for COP8

6. The DSG invited STRP members to review the proposed Technical Sessions (TSs) planned for COP8 and recalled that each Ramsar TS consists of short presentations on aspects of one or more expected products, followed by break-out regional discussions. He indicated that SC25 had accepted STRP9's recommendation for TS subthemes on climate change and water allocation, but had declined to add restoration; presentations on this subject can still be proposed as side events.

7. The SG indicated that all TS planning will be reviewed by SC26, not least on the basis of STRP10 results. He reiterated that all TSs should focus on a product, but for some presently planned no output has yet emerged: these issues should be dropped. He noted SC25's addition of a call for "case studies" to some TSs, at the request of one SC member, but indicated that there is no plan to

seek out lengthy case studies, for which there is neither time nor space, and that only examples will be referred to: more extensive case studies can go into side events.

8. Dave Pritchard (BirdLife International) questioned the subthemes mentioned in TS 3.2 on under-represented wetland types, noting that guidance on seagrass and soft-bottom communities have not been developed while work is being done on threatened waterbird species. The DSG agreed that STRP has chosen to focus upon mangroves, coral reefs, and peatlands, and added that wet grasslands and, thanks to WWF, mountain wetlands are also to be included. Threatened waterbird species as a type for designation will be added if ready in time, and additional issues may still arise.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)

9. The DSG recalled that an ad hoc group at STRP9 discussed input on key topics for the MA, and this has proved invaluable to the MA in understanding what the conventions need from the Assessment. The MA secretariat has provided an analysis showing STRP9's recommendations relative to MA's "Synthesis Questions" and suggesting possible reciprocal inputs (agenda paper STRP10/1). STRP members are invited to consider further input.

10. Ian Noble (Millennium Assessment Working Group 2 Co-Chair) made a PowerPoint presentation on the present structure, objectives, and directions of the MA, including a "horrendogram" showing interacting relationships among Ecosystem structures and functions, Ecosystem goods and services, Socio-economic drivers, and Proximate pressures. He suggested that for all the major global MEAs, including Ramsar, the Assessment could fulfill the role that the IPCC has performed for the UNFCCC. He proceeded from a general description of MA progress to a listing of areas in which it could be especially pertinent to Ramsar questions involving wetland issues, and stressed that the MA is still at a very early stage and will develop over time.

11. To George Zalidis' question about the absence of the Mediterranean from the proposed local assessments, it was indicated that, in addition to the global and subglobal assessments undertaken under the aegis of the MA, additional regional and local assessments will be welcome, for which additional funding will have to be found.

12. Ger Bergkamp (IUCN) felt that the MA is supply-driven and hasn't yet made a good case that such a large investment is needed. Ian Noble indicated that the demand for such an assessment at global scale using consistent standards is indeed there and will begin to be more evident as the MA progresses. Gilberto Cintrón (US FWS) outlined limitations in the hierarchical method to be employed. Richard Holland (WWF Living Waters Campaign) wondered whether the fundamental questions would be addressed, such as what is the baseline for freshwater ecosystems, what is the extent of the resource. Mr Noble noted that MA Working Group 2 on "Condition" will address

these fundamental questions, but the real challenge lies in finding the best way to describe the current ecosystem condition. Max Finlayson raised the question of the uneven availability of required data and the need to identify and then fill gaps, and Ian Noble agreed that there is a bit of a chicken-and-egg problem in ascertaining what data is needed and what is already available in comparable form.

Decision STRP 10.1: The STRP recognized the strong links between a series of issues on which the Panel is working, in particular on ecological character of wetlands and assessment methods, and the programme of work of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, encouraged the MA in its work, and expressed its intention to contribute to that process through an ad hoc working group for the purpose. The STRP designated Max Finlayson and Doug Taylor as STRP focal points in order to establish a permanent relationship between the MA and the STRP, and invited its members to channel input to the MA through them.

AGENDA ITEM 14 (transposed): Working Group 11 on ecological quality, assessment methodologies, and early warning systems

13. Max Finlayson made a PowerPoint presentation on the results of the Group's analysis of Ramsar Handbooks 7 and 8 ('Strategic framework for the List' and 'Frameworks for managing wetlands'). WG11 included some 12 substantial recommendations for strengthening the Ramsar guidance, harmonizing it in terminology and with other Ramsar guidelines, filling gaps, and supplementing it as needed, especially with guidelines on technical aspects of delineating, mapping boundaries, and evaluating goods and services of wetlands. He urged cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on rapid assessment of biodiversity, possibly with technical handbooks. He recommended a study of the practical usefulness and purpose of the Montreux Record, and urged a holistic view of the Ramsar toolkit, possibly with a diagram for clarity.

14. Parastu Mirabzadeh (CBD secretariat) outlined the progress and timetable of CBD's SBSTTA's work on rapid assessment and invited Ramsar input. She noted that SCBD is currently studying the criteria and classification of inland water ecosystems, using the criteria set out in Annex I of the CBD text, and will inform the STRP on the results of the study.

15. It was agreed that Ramsar guidance on criteria and designation is a bit uneven and needs both strengthening and harmonization. Tobias Salathé indicated that the CPs have no problem designating new sites under the waterbird criteria but need clearer help on the other criteria, and felt that case studies would be useful. The DSG suggested that this issue of gaps and harmonization

could be included as part of STRP's strategic recommendations to COP on future work of the Panel, and noted that the COP8 TS on tools could be altered to include these recommendations.

16. Stephen Hunter suggested that these recommendations could be valuable in beginning to create an agenda for COP9.

17. The Working Groups were requested to review Max Finlayson's recommendations and consider their relevance in terms of their own areas of work.

Decision STRP 10.2: The STRP requested its Working Group on Ecological Character to seek comment on its working paper and prepare a document by the September deadline on gaps and harmonization of Ramsar guidance on ecological character for circulation to STRP and transmission to SC26.

18. Salvatore Arico (UNESCO's MAB Programme) and Parastu Mirabzadeh (CBD) confirmed their organizations' willingness to provide comment on the Working Group's document. It was suggested that CBD's review of existing rapid assessment methodologies, to be considered by CBD's COP6 in April 2002, might be taken up by Ramsar's SC Subgroup meeting in May 2002 for bringing forward to COP8. It was agreed that the title of COP8 TS 2.3 on rapid assessment should stand for the moment but may need changing in light of future CBD and MAB work.

Decision STRP 10.3: The STRP recognized the value and relevance of the CBD's work on rapid assessment and confirmed its intention to contribute to that process, by means of input from the Working Group on Ecological Character.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Working Group 12 on climate change

19. Rick van Dam (ERISS) made a PowerPoint presentation on the Working Group's draft paper (STRP10/2) and reported on the improvements suggested by the workshops on Climate Change held two days ago in Gland. He noted that the IPCC's Third Assessment Report provided the basis for most of the analyses of wetland issues. He described the revised structure of the paper (see [Annex 1](#)) and indicated that there will be a draft Resolution, an Executive Summary (which will serve as a guidance annexed to the resolution), and a background resource paper containing the bulk of the scientific material in STRP10/2, which will be the "comprehensive review" of climate change and wetlands called for by COP7.

20. George Zalidis noted that traditional Ramsar terminology is not always consistent with that of other, younger MEAs, e.g. CBD's "good and services" vs. Ramsar's "values and functions". Max Finlayson indicated a need for care in adapting to new terminologies without consideration of the

large body of existing Ramsar documentation. The DSG suggested that STRP may wish to add this important issue to its list of strategic tasks for the future, but stressed that the main point is that each document should define the way in which it is using its terminology, each defining its own terms. This is especially true for review documents which must traverse the idiosyncratic terminologies of a number of bodies.

21. There was some discussion of the place of the comprehensive review amongst other COP8 documents and the resources to be committed to it. The DSG offered one option in the example of the GROWI report, which presented an executive summary to COP7 and backed it up with a CD-ROM bursting with further support documents. Ian Noble recalled the IPCC practice, in which governments "accepted" a body of support materials and "adopted" a summary for policy-makers including recommendations.

22. Anada Tiéga stressed the importance of getting this sort of material into the hands of the CPs in easily accessible form (as with the Values and Functions Info Pack) to be shared with other bodies in other governmental sectors.

23. The SG indicated that since COP7 requested a "comprehensive review" related to climate change, not just the executive summary (which may be embodied in the draft Resolution), but rather the full report should be presented as a COP document in the three languages, and it must emanate from the STRP, not just from the Working Group. He felt that a paper of this importance should be circulated for comment to the Ramsar Administrative Authorities, with time allowed for them to consult relevant experts within their governments.

Decision STRP 10.4: The STRP endorsed the Working Group's proposed rearrangement of its work into a draft Resolution, an Executive Summary for guidance to the CPs, and the comprehensive review of wetlands and climate change as requested by COP7, and approved of the Group's new structure for the comprehensive review. The Panel accepted the Group's timetable ([Annex 1](#)).

AGENDA ITEM 8: Working Group 10 on water allocation

24. The DSG explained that the goal of the workshop held the previous day had been to refine guidelines out of the resource paper presented as STRP10/3, whilst preserving the great usefulness of the rest of the paper's material. WG Lead Geoff Cowan introduced the paper and expressed gratitude to Dr Heather MacKay for her work on the resource paper.

25. Mike Acreman (Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH)) made a PowerPoint presentation on the workshop's consideration of the resource paper, and first addressed the basic question of "who

are the guidelines for?". The WG intends to supply a guideline document of 10-15 pages; a technical resource document of about 40 pages to support it (to be published in some other way, e.g., Ramsar Toolkit, Web site, Kluwer series); a draft Resolution for COP8; a brochure; and perhaps a training video. He distinguished between two audiences for the guidance: Level 1, the Contracting Parties, which should be reminded of their international obligations to fulfill the Ramsar wise use principles, and Level 2, the implementing agencies that need guidance on actions to be taken. Dr Acreman described the Table of Contents and basic principles to be built into the guidance document, as shown in [Annex 2](#).

26. Anada Tiéga expressed concern that water allocation for wetlands also involves issues of land-use planning processes and that further study is needed related to them. He felt that Ramsar site designations should also include the land required to fulfill the needed wetland functions, especially in floodplain situations.

27. The Chair agreed and suggested that STRP could recommend that the land-use planning component of water allocation, especially with regard to floodplains, might be the subject of future work.

28. Richard Holland (WWF) voiced gratification at the revised structure of the document, which he felt would greatly aid clarity, and stressed the need to address the gap between the wetland managers and the water allocation decision-makers in many CPs.

29. Najam Khurshid noted the need to address water allocation issues for species, as well as for sites.

30. Salvatore Arico (UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme) expressed MAB's great interest in the development of these water allocation guidelines, and the STRP's proposed inventory guidelines as well, in light of UNESCO's balance between MAB's integrated management approach and its International Hydrological Programme. UNESCO hopes to contribute further to these and other Working Group outputs.

31. George Zalidis was glad to see the document restructuring and emphasized the need to use language intelligible to water decision-makers. Since this is such a key issue, he urged that it be cross-referenced to other draft guidance, especially on restoration and ecological character.

32. Ger Bergkamp (IUCN) stressed the question of who are the guidelines for – 1) for Ramsar focal points to use when talking to other governmental sectors (with suggestions on how to integrate environmental flows in discussion with other sectors), or 2) to the governments as a whole (more general, less practical).

33. Mike Acreman indicated that the WG's intention was to address both of these target audiences, with its Level 1 and Level 2 approach. The Chair noted that our mandate is to respond to requests from our COP members, but we should try to reach other audiences whenever possible. The SG felt that our technical guidelines should be based on the best way to do things, regardless of who is going to do them; as a matter of routine our guidance is channelled through our Administrative Authorities and we rely upon them to find out who needs to use the guidance in-country. WG Chair Geoff Cowan explained that the Levels 1 and 2 distinction is intended to provide Ramsar AAs, usually in the environmental sector, with arguments to bring forward to the other sectors.

34. The WG on Water Allocation proposed to send revised drafts to STRP members by 10 September 2001, accept comments from STRP until 1 October, and send final drafts to the Bureau by 10 October 2001.

35. The SG applauded that goal but urged closer integration of Levels 1 and 2 as targeted groups, since increasingly water management people are becoming involved in Ramsar issues and participating in Ramsar fora alongside the AAs.

36. Max Finlayson urged that the water allocation guidance include cross-references back to other Ramsar guidance, e.g., on monitoring.

STRP Decision 10.5: The STRP approved the proposed structure for the revised guidelines and comprehensive review of water allocation management (Annex 2), to be completed under the agreed timetable for STRP outputs (Annex 3).

STRP Decision 10.6: The STRP recognized the need for further study of the role of land-use planning in floodplain and river basin guidance and urged that a call for such further study be included in the draft Resolution enabling the water allocation guidance.

Timetable for STRP outputs

37. Discussion ensued of the proposed timetable for STRP outputs, excepting those specifically agreed on other schedules.

STRP Decision 10.7: The STRP accepted the proposed timetable for outputs (Annex 3) in principle, except where stipulated otherwise, and agreed that, after circulation of final drafts to STRP and others for comment, the STRP Chair is authorized to approve final drafts for transmission to the Bureau for editorial preparation in advance of the Standing Committee meeting (3-7 December 2001).

AGENDA ITEM 9: Working Group 2 on the World Commission on Dams

38. WG Lead Max Finlayson noted that the most important part of document STRP10/4, prepared by Jamie Skinner formerly of WCD, and based on a paper prepared by the CBD Secretariat for CBD SBSTTA, is part III. This needs further work to relate the WCD guidelines to Ramsar issues, Resolutions and guidelines, and Ramsar's role on inland waters for CBD through the Joint Work Plan.

39. Ger Bergkamp (IUCN) urged a much stronger acknowledgement of the work of the WCD and the value and importance of its report for Ramsar and wetland managers. He stressed the need for careful wording in the draft Resolution that would show clear support for the WCD report and its relevance for Ramsar.

40. The SG urged a separate COP8 Resolution calling attention to the WCD report and offering guidance on how to use it. He suggested that the current paper, as revised, should be offered for background but not incorporated.

41. Richard Holland (WWF) agreed and observed that paper STRP10/4 seems to understate the importance of the WCD report. He urged a much stronger COP8 Resolution.

STRP Decision 10.8: The STRP resolved to provide a draft Resolution for COP8 supporting the World Commission on Dams report, accompanied by a redraft of Working Paper STRP10/4 which will include 1) enhancement of section 1 with explanation of the importance of the WCD report for Ramsar authorities; 2) a list of the most useful WCD documents (its summary, 28 technical documents, and full report), and 3) revision of section 3, according to the agreed timetable for STRP outputs (Annex 3). The STRP invited Richard Holland (WWF), with assistance by Ger Bergkamp (IUCN) and Parastu Mirabzadeh (CBD), to lead on drafting the proposed Resolution and sections 1 and 2 and circulating these to Working Group 2. The STRP invited Max Finlayson to lead on drafting section 3 in coordination with those mentioned above.

AGENDA ITEM 10: Working Group 10 on peatlands

42. Jack Rieley described the evolution of the drafting process for the Global Action Plan for Peatlands (GAPP) since Ramsar COP7. The workshop held the previous day has benefited from invited comments from 18 Contracting Parties and many other bodies, and the Working Group has much improved and streamlined the GAPP text. Since the GAPP will be approved as a Ramsar document, Ramsar implementation roles have been built into the language, but it should be clear

that this is a collaborative role with the "Action Plan Partners" (APPs), mostly the International Peat Society (IPS) and the International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG) but with others as well.

43. The DSG felt that the Bureau's leadership role in the GAPP should be rephrased throughout, because the Bureau is only the treaty secretariat and its general mandate is fixed to certain functions in support of the Parties. The Bureau cannot take the lead in other ventures however worthy. The DSG noted that the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan 2 (2003-2008) now under contemplation also has a section of actions on peatlands, and he suggested that the GAPP borrow wording consistent with the SP's action statements.

44. The DSG observed that, when the GAPP mandates that "The Ramsar Bureau will do such and such" or "The Ramsar Bureau, in association with its Action Plan Partners, will do such and such", it should be altered to "the Action Plan Partners, with the assistance of the Ramsar Bureau, will . . .", so that the intention of the action statement will be preserved but the Bureau will not be left with a bunch of unfillable demands in the event that the partners providing action under the Plan should be unable to complete their mandates.

45. Jack Rieley acknowledged this concern but emphasized the need for a high Ramsar visibility for the sake of credibility on the ground, in terms of fundraising etc., though it's clear from the GAPP that most of the work needs to be done in the field. There is an overall partnership approach but Ramsar needs to remain at the top, to help with resourcing, and a clear emphasis on synergies should remain in the document. Dr Rieley noted that many of the GAPP actions are in fact already under way, and he noted that the GAPP calls for complete implementation before COP9.

46. The DSG requested an annex showing where actions are already under way, so that readers can distinguish what needs still to be started from scratch. Dr Rieley agreed to provide that list.

47. Jack Rieley outlined continuing collaboration amongst IPS, IMCG, and Wetlands International and noted that Doug Taylor (WI) will report on additional guidelines for designation of peatlands as Ramsar sites later in the meeting. He reported on progress on development of the "Global Guidelines for the Wise Use of Mires and Peatlands", an enormous compendium intended for practitioners which is referenced from the GAPP, which should be available by SC26 and certainly by COP8. Because the Global Guidelines will be too big for many readers, there will also be a 4-5pp "Statement on the Wise Use of Peatlands" based on the Guidelines' principles but not a summary. Drafts have been provided to STRP and feedback is welcome.

48. Discussion ensued about whether the vast Global Guidelines could be reduced to a more succinct set of Ramsar guidelines on wise use of peatlands, but it was felt that, with adoption of the GAPP and the proposed designation guidelines for peatlands, enough is enough for the time

being. Stephen Hunter suggested that COP8 be invited to request additional wise use guidelines for peatlands for COP9.

Decision STRP 10.9: The STRP endorsed the present thrust of the Global Action Plan for Peatlands (GAPP) and urged a redraft concerning the assignment of responsibilities within the agreed timetable for STRP outputs (Annex 3). The Ramsar Bureau was requested to draft a Resolution for COP8 to adopt the GAPP and to include support for certain other peat activities in progress and a request for additional guidance on the wise use of peatlands to be prepared for COP9.

AGENDA ITEM 11: Working Group 9 on wetland management planning

49. WG leader Tex Hawkins drew attention to the work of Mike Alexander in preparing the draft guidelines, particularly in the time of floods and foot-and-mouth disease in Wales. He outlined the results of the workshop and noted that the document had grown beyond the COP7 mandate. The group focused on principles and did not take a cookbook approach, given local variabilities. It recognized that additional training may always be necessary. He noted that case studies can be provided to back up many of the guidelines, and urged members to add at least one example to CIESIN's Ramsar Data Deposit, which will be demonstrated by Antoinette Wannebo later in the meeting. The WG suggests inclusion of, instead of a selected bibliography, a set of Web links to existing resources. He pointed out that the Working Group sought a change in tone to emphasize influence rather than constraint, the positive rather than the negative.

50. In reply to a query from the SG, it was urged that these new management guidelines be clearly marked as replacing the older guidelines, rather than supplementing them.

51. Anada Tiéga noted that recent experience in Tanzania and Botswana indicates a need for the size of the site and complexity of its issues to be factored into the guidelines. He emphasized that site management planning should also include the goal of implementing national policies and strategies and international treaty obligations, including sectoral policies on environment, agricultural, animal diseases, etc. Management planning should identify discrepancies with other policies and strategies and include conflict resolution measures, and identify the issues in complex situations. It is easier to assign implementation roles by grouping issues, and it's often found that some parts are already being implemented (by NGOs, etc.).

52. Mr Tiéga observed that monitoring should not involve only actions, but should also consider how well strategies are being implemented – this is important in relationships with partnerships at national level and especially with international organizations.

53. Mr Tiéga urged that guidelines should also include a section on the use of Ramsar tools (e.g., indigenous people, water allocation, outreach, etc.). Tex Hawkins responded positively and asked Mr Tiéga to specify parts of the text to be so amended.

54. Mike Alexander noted that the entire management process being proposed is policy-driven, and international conventions and laws are represented there, as are local laws and institutions.

55. Tobias Salathé pointed out that, in the draft guidelines, only three land uses are catered for: nature conservation, recreation, and tourism. In recent years, Ramsar has paid attention to many other uses as well, and he suggested wording to indicate the inclusion of agricultural concerns, transport policy, industrial policy, and so on. Increasingly, Ramsar emphasizes management planning at the river basin level, rather than reserve management.

56. Mike Alexander felt that the document's diagram indicated that, though the process starts with nature conservation (which is "why we're here"), it then broadens out to include a wide range of other objectives.

57. Tex Hawkins said that the manner in which a site management plan relates to a basin plan, and the communities outside, is critical. He welcomed the comments and promised to strengthen the sensitivity to those issues.

58. Dave Pritchard urged that, if this document is meant to replace the existing management guidelines, the implications of that for existing site plans drawn up according to the first guidelines should be made clear to the Parties. Mike Alexander agreed that Parties should be reassured that newly written site management plans under the old guidelines need not instantly be rewritten, but he noted that, since all management plans require periodic review, revisions may be called for in due time.

59. Tobias Salathé and the DSG suggested that two scenarios be foreseen: 1) management of a protected area where nature conservation is the primary objective, and 2) multiple use sites, where management is meant to maintain the "nature conservation" values but they are not primary. Nothing in Ramsar obliges Parties to make nature conservation the primary objective, rather than to maintain the ecological character of a site often with multiple uses.

60. The SG urged using the words "ecological character" rather than "nature conservation", and despite perceived difficulties in measuring "ecological character" it was agreed that traditional Ramsar terminology should be employed wherever possible.

61. Tobias Salathé returned to the issue of the need to demonstrate to CPs the "added value" of Ramsar designation, many of whom are already legislating nature reserves regularly and may see no advantage in Ramsar listing. It should be made clear to them that Ramsar designation adds a "wise use" (sustainable use) obligation even to sites which are not nature reserves.

62. The Working Group agreed to redraft the document with these considerations in mind, with assistance from Anada Tiéga and Tobias Salathé, and will draft a Resolution for COP8. A formal STRP decision will be agreed later in the meeting (see further discussion being at paragraph 150).

Decision STRP 10.10: The STRP approved the structure and contents of the new guidelines, subject to incorporation of text concerning the points raised by the Panel, under the agreed timetable for STRP outputs (Annex 3). The STRP agreed with the proposal by the Working Group on Management Planning not to pursue a selected bibliography of relevant citations, but rather to include a set of up-to-date links on the Ramsar Web site and encourage input to CIESIN's Ramsar Data Deposit. (See also Decision STRP10.22.)

AGENDA ITEM 12: San José Record of well-managed Ramsar sites

63. The DSG noted that the proposed plan follows STRP9's recommendations entirely but includes STRP9's two bracketed alternatives in paragraph 15 concerning a removal process.

64. Stephen Hunter (SC Chair) offered a third option to paragraph 15 on removal. Rather than ad hoc removal upon complaint or a fixed term for review, he suggested that San José listing be effective only for a fixed term (say, three years), after which reapplication would be needed.

65. David Pritchard expressed BirdLife's strong dissatisfaction with the ad hoc removal process, given that current implementation of a management plan should be a key part of the nomination criteria. He supported Stephen Hunter's new 3rd option.

Decision STRP 10.11: The STRP endorsed the draft plan for the San José Record, with the substitution of a fixed term for sites to be maintained on the Record before re-nomination, and requested the Bureau to draft an enabling Resolution for COP8 and transmit both to Standing Committee for consideration.

AGENDA ITEM 7 (transposed): Working Group 1 on integrated coastal zone management

66. The DSG introduced the background on the ICZM Group's ambitious plan and this week's workshop discussions resulting in the tabled Revised Scoping Brief. The objective is to raise the

profile of wetlands for different kinds of ICZM practitioners and to provide Ramsar AAs with tools for explaining wetland issues to other sectors. The workshop established a new contents for the Principles and Guidelines (see [Annex 4](#)), totalling no more than 7500 words, consisting of 1) introduction, 2) purpose of the principles and guidelines, 3) definition of the coastal zone, 4) ICZM definitions and terms, 5) general principles and practice of ICZM, and three sections on integration of wetland issues in coastal issues, including some 12 principles briefly defined. This would be based upon the Working Paper prepared for STRP by Yara Schaeffer-Novelli and Gilberto Cintrón.

67. The DSG indicated that an outside expert would be brought in to carry this forward, possibly Mr Ivica Trumbic (Priority Actions Programme/Regional Activity Center – Mediterranean Action Plan/UNEP), with a first draft ready for WG review by 28 September 2001, a second draft for review by external experts by 15 October, a final draft for STRP approval by the end of January 2002, and transmission to the SC Subgroup on COP8 by 28 February 2001.

68. Salvatore Arico (MAB) observed that CBD has studied the relevance of existing ICZM guidelines (e.g., those by UNEP, OECD, and World Bank) and found them largely similar but not directly pertinent. He urged that guidelines should explain to Ramsar practitioners precisely how to integrate wetland issues into ICZM, and he said that MAB would wish to be involved in the review phase of this document.

69. The DSG recalled that the Working Group also reviewed existing guidelines some time ago and found that although wetlands are mentioned in them, the effect is not as Ramsar would have it. The Working Group also explored ideas about how best to use the Group's other work so far, as a separate item and additional tool, but no conclusions have yet been reached.

70. Parastu Mirabzadeh (SCBD) clarified CBD's work in this area, especially in the context of the CBD/Ramsar Joint Work Plan. Anada Tiéga urged future work on ways in which ICZM might mitigate climate change effects, and the DSG noted that that will be included in the guidelines document. Geoff Cowan stressed the importance of cross-referencing this document to other STRP outputs on water allocation, climate change, etc.

Decision STRP 10.12: The STRP approved the proposed structure, plan, and timetable of the Principles and Guidelines on integrated coastal zone management, as shown in [Annex 4](#).

71. The Chair noted the associated ICZM bibliography that the Working Group has produced and solicited input to the list and ideas on how to make it more available. He observed that the WG is considering the desirability of developing that further.

AGENDA ITEM 13: Working Group 6 on wetland inventory

72. Max Finlayson described the earlier workshop's suggested changes to the Framework for Wetland Inventory document and tabled a revised draft, including a proposed annex indicating wetland classification systems. He solicited input, especially on the tables of classification systems and inventory methods, and he noted that the reading list as presented is not yet complete.

73. George Zalidis agreed with the proposed structure and addition of criteria for choosing an inventory method; he urged an additional list of which inventory methods are accompanied by full documentation and support for users.

74. Anada Tiéga, drawing upon his recent experience in Mauritius, urged that once a Party has acceded to the Convention it should therefore accept the Ramsar definition of wetlands expressed in the treaty, but should then be free to use a wetland classification system of its own choosing. Max Finlayson agreed to add that to section 3.6.

75. Geoff Cowan urged that the inventory method chosen should be linked to some common denominator. Dr Finlayson felt that a choice of classification isn't really necessary, for it can be derived from the data and altered as needed. It's important to fix upon a metadata format.

76. The DSG recalled STRP9's support for the GROWI-2 project, which includes a structure for metadata and plans to set up a Web-based database for metadata on wetland inventories. Full funding hasn't yet been found for GROWI-2, but he expressed thanks to the UK Government for its voluntary support for the development of GROWI metadata.

77. Antoinette Wannebo noted that CIESIN also has Web-based metadata tools which meet US Government FGDC standards and ISO standards. The choice of metadata fields is not as difficult as the problem of developing a standard vocabulary.

78. Doug Taylor (Wetlands International) pointed to the lack of a place for data on the river basin context of a wetland; the DSG suggested that this be added to Table 2. Anada Tiéga urged that it should be emphasized that the conduct of a national wetland inventory should provide an opportunity to harmonize wetland definitions and classifications throughout government sectors. The SG suggested that "source of water" be added to data on the water regime. George Zalidis urged adding identification of the projection system to the data on coordinates.

79. It was agreed that the draft Resolution on this matter should stress the importance of wetland inventory, urge CPs to do it if they haven't, urge the donor community to support wetland inventory efforts, then adopt the framework for the Parties' use. It was further agreed that

"Framework" is the correct word to use in the document title and that the Technical Session title should be changed to conform to that.

Decision STRP 10.13: The Panel approved the proposed structure and contents of the Framework for Wetland Inventory, to be progressed according to the agreed timetable (Annex 3), and requested the Working Group to accompany the document with a draft Resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 15: The Montreux Record

80. The Chair drew attention to recent requests (from Trinidad & Tobago and India) for removal of sites from the Montreux Record of Ramsar sites where change in ecological character has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur as a result of human interventions. He questioned the relevance of STRP's participation in the removal process, as called for in the present *modus operandi*. The decision on removal is finally the CP's to make. He suggested that STRP members will seldom have sufficient information to advise responsibly and felt that this role is not in the STRP's scope of work.

81. Peter Maitland agreed and said that he felt unable to comment on the Nariva Swamp petition, though he didn't feel that those STRP members better informed about individual sites might not be able to contribute effectively.

82. Dave Pritchard urged that the opportunity for STRP advice should remain as a step in order to ensure a role for scientific advice in the removal process, even if members frequently decline to advise. STRP members or National Focal Points (NFPs) with relevant experience in the region and threats involved would be important consultees. He suggested that an effort should be made, in the few removal requests that arise, to identify a subset of appropriate members, rather than a blanket request to all members.

83. Doug Taylor suggested that a small team be named, drawn from an experts list rather than from STRP, to consider all removal requests; STRP might have the capacity to advise strongly in some cases and none at all in others, but the suggested team would provide consistency. Tobias Salathé suggested requiring a Ramsar Advisory Mission for every removal.

84. The Chair agreed with circulating information for advice among appropriate members but dissuaded from requiring a formal opinion on removal from the STRP as such. It should be a Bureau activity to seek advice from appropriate experts, not an STRP function. In the absence of personal knowledge of the site, STRP opinions would be based only upon information provided by the Party itself, since there are no resources available for verification.

85. In further discussion, it was noted that the STRP NFP network (which is not yet complete) could expand the pool of expertise to be drawn upon, once the NFPs' areas of expertise have been recorded. Some speakers felt that the present *modus operandi* only calls upon STRP to advise if it wishes to, but others believed that the Montreux process calls for definite action from STRP and shouldn't. It was understood that the Parties have never surrendered their sovereign right to add and remove sites from the Record, but it was suggested that the possibility of a Ramsar Advisory Mission, perhaps including STRP members, should be built into the removal process. The SG felt that few Parties would wish to insist upon removal against the advice of the Convention's experts.

86. The present Montreux procedure (Resolution VI.1) indicates that the Party will initiate the removal process and, after having considered advice, will make its decision. The SG suggested that matters be left just as they are, and that it be recommended that when STRP members are not in a position to advise, the desirability of having the Bureau organize a RAM (with or without STRP members participating) should be emphasized. The STRP Chair, in consultation with appropriate members, can choose an STRP subgroup to offer advice on behalf of STRP, so that the whole STRP need not be formally involved.

87. Anada Tiéga pointed out that, though the intention was that the CP should fill out a Questionnaire whenever it wishes to add a site to or remove one from the Record, what Resolution VI.1 actually says is that the Questionnaire is only required when a third party notifies the Bureau of threats. It was agreed that this in clarity in the procedure should be rectified.

88. The DSG indicated that a subgroup should be set up to consider India's removal request for Chilika Lake.

Decision STRP 10.14: The Panel decided that for each request for removal from the Montreux Record, the Chair will appoint an STRP Subgroup, which may involve STRP members and invited experts, to carry out the review of the case on behalf of the STRP. The Panel also advised that Parties should be invited to complete the Montreux Record questionnaire in all cases when a new site is added to or removed from the Record.

AGENDA ITEM 18: Working Group 8 on wetland restoration

89. George Zalidis briefed the STRP on the Workshop changes to the principles document (STRP10/14) and drew attention to the WG's mini-Web site at http://ramsar.org/strp_rest_index.htm.

90. Bill Streever, who was chiefly responsible for creating the mini-Web site, indicated that quite a few suggestions for improvement have been received and will be incorporated, and he solicited

more "case studies" on restoration approaches from STRP members. He reported on two "shortfalls" in the WG's tasks: for several reasons, it appears that the foreseen database of restoration expertise will not materialize, and as agreed at the last STRP the paper on "small dams and restoration" has been abandoned. He noted that more than 90% of the Group's mandate is now complete and that a draft Resolution will be completed by 15 August; the mini-Web site, with minor corrections, is ready for public launch. Dr Streever read over the draft Resolution and noted the STRP's suggestions for amendment.

91. Dave Pritchard proposed restoring the mention of Environmental Impact Assessment, removed from the first draft. George Zalidis cautioned that it's very hard to assess impacts of restoration projects in advance and might add an unneeded layer of bureaucracy. Dr. Pritchard also suggested reinstating the removed text on restoration as a form of compensation, which indicated the inherent uncertainty of restoration, because it would help to avoid too facile a use of restoration in compensation matters.

92. Anada Tiéga requested the addition of mention of possible restoration impacts far away, perhaps outside the nation, so that even non-local stakeholders should be involved in the process, and suggested adding mention of incentives over the long-term. Geoff Cowan mentioned the need for training in restoration practice. Max Finlayson suggested that the "Genius Loci" box be removed or replaced by a very brief sentence on the same idea (that no two places are exactly alike) and urged that cross-references to existing Resolutions and Ramsar guidance be added throughout. Bill Streever promised to take on board all of these suggestions, and counted on the Bureau to supply the cross-referencing.

93. Several speakers felt that the draft document's Glossary does not really serve that purpose and should be left on the mini-Web site only, with a new title such as "Wetland Restoration Jargon". It was agreed that the few words requiring definition within the document will be glossed in brackets or a footnote. Several speakers, however, did identify a strong need for a larger glossary of all Ramsar terminology.

Decision STRP 10.15: The STRP endorsed the draft Resolution and Principles of Wetland Restoration, with the agreed amendments, to be delivered under the accepted timetable (Annex 3), and recognized that the Working Group will not be in a position to deliver the proposed restoration experts database and paper on small dams.

Decision STRP 10.16: The STRP recommended that the development of a general glossary of Ramsar terminology should be included in the STRP programme of work for the triennium 2003-2005.

94. Concerning the WG's other tasks, it was explained that Roy Gardner, who has agreed to supply a paper for the mini-Web site on incentives for restoration, will do so but not soon, and in the meantime Bill Streever has posted a paper of his own on the site as a placeholder. George Zalidis still intends to supply a paper on the socio-economics of restoration for the mini-Web site, but its conclusions are already embodied in the Principles document.

95. The DSG pointed out that, though there will not be space in the Technical Sessions for restoration, that does not preclude other opportunities to carry the subject forward. The SG outlined three options for doing so: 1) organizing a workshop for the Global Biodiversity Forum scheduled for 15-16 November 2002 just prior to COP8 (the GBF Steering Committee will consider the preliminary programme in November 2001); 2) initiating discussion in plenary on day two of COP8; and 3) hosting a side event during COP8. The Working Group expressed interest in pursuing these three options and will discuss the question further.

AGENDA ITEM 16: Working Group 3 on impact assessment

96. Dave Pritchard (BirdLife International) apologized for the necessary absence of WG Lead Andrea Athanas (IUCN) and briefed the Panel on the Group's progress on the seven tasks approved by SC25. Most of them were mandated "subject to resources being available", and in fact resources were not secured for pursuing the chief outputs. Nonetheless, the members were able to accomplish some parts of the programme, albeit in slimmed down versions.

97. Turning to the seven tasks in order, Dave Pritchard reported that the MOU has indeed been signed between Ramsar and the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA). Concerning identification of IAIA professionals and fostering liaison between them and STRP NFPs, IAIA does not yet have a fully functioning register of experts, but the Working Group proposes to use three other overlapping lists of names (from e-mail list servers) which the Bureau can provide to the STRP NFPs for contacts. On the Internet-based Resource Kit, IUCN has been adding some materials but without resourcing it has not been able to pursue this vigorously, and will be less able to do so in future; the Group hopes to find volunteer assistance, possibly from within IAIA, to take this over. Concerning cooperation with CBD, he drew attention to the tabled document on IAIA's contributions intended for presentation to CBD's SBSTTA-7 meeting in November 2001, which the Group felt is tangentially relevant to task no. 5; he urged that a Ramsar representative address SBSTTA-7 on impact assessment issues and seek to foster greater tripartite CBD/Ramsar/IAIA collaboration.

98. Continuing his report on WG3's progress, Dave Pritchard indicated that no resources were found to produce the requested review of EIA guidelines from a wetlands perspective – in its place, Andrea Athanas has agreed to prepare a short note describing progress of the UNEP project that is

relevant to this question, which should be ready by the end of July 2001. It wasn't clear to the Group what the COP meant by calling for a "review of guidelines". Concerning the requested review of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), similarly, no resources were found for the proposed project, and Andrea Athanas has agreed to produce a brief note summarizing recent developments with SEA in various parts of the world, due to be completed by mid-August.

99. Working Group 3 was also asked to review other STRP draft outputs from the point of view of impact assessment, and it has provided drafting language on EIA to several other Groups in order to keep things in alignment.

100. Dave Pritchard pointed out two issues which are now in the draft Second Strategic Plan for the Convention, and which therefore may need to be considered for future study by the STRP: 1) training in EIA and SEA, and 2) impact assessment and large dams. The Group has prepared text for a draft Resolution on impact assessment for COP8, and offers to report to COP8, especially on CBD/Ramsar/IAIA collaboration, to Technical Session 2.2 if wished.

101. The DSG suggested that Ramsar AAs, in addition to STRP NFPs, also be notified of IAIA contacts. He inquired about the two notes soon to be provided; Mr Pritchard indicated that they would be for the STRP's information, not for presentation to COP or part of a Resolution.

Decision STRP 10.17: The STRP noted the report of the Working Group on Impact Assessment and recognized that the Group will be unable to produce the requested reviews because of a lack of resourcing.

AGENDA ITEM 17: Working Group 4 on incentive measures

102. Tex Hawkins reported that no technical document will be produced, as the required resources were not found. He expressed gratitude to Andrea Athanas for drafting text and to Antoinette Wannebo of CIESIN for setting up the Web tools and data deposit. He indicated that the requested annotated bibliography on incentive measures has been developed by IUCN's Environmental Law Centre and has been added to the Internet resource kit hosted on the IUCN Web site.

103. Concerning the Web-based data deposit, this has been maintained by CIESIN and the Working Group requests that the Bureau periodically check for accuracy. The WG will send an e-mail to STRP NFPs seeking further data deposits, and intends to set up at COP8 a facility for the entry of case studies on incentive measures. He expressed the need for a "health warning" about reliability on the Web-based resource kit if it can no longer be supervised. New pages on incentives have been added to IUCN's Web site, and a complete revision of Jeff McNeeley's book "Biodiversity and Economics" is nearly ready and will be added as well.

104. Concerning the task of a review of incentive guidelines, due to a lack of resources this has not been attempted. The Group is pursuing alternatives, including contact with Tim Swanson of the Biodiversity and Economics for Conservation (BIOECON) project, a 3-year EC-funded project coordinated by University College London in partnership with other European universities. The Group suggested that Tim Swanson might be brought to COP8 as an invited expert to contribute to the Technical Session.

105. To the tabled draft Resolution on incentive measures, Max Finlayson urged cross-referencing to the wise use guidelines. He asked whether any mechanism is in place for occasions when, as in this draft, Parties are requested to provide feedback. The SG replied that the Bureau formally communicates all Resolutions and Recommendations to the Parties after each COP with a solemn plea by diplomatic notification that all requested feedback be provided. In some cases, special diplomatic notifications are also made, and issues can be highlighted thus whenever appropriate. Such requests for input are also normally included in the next round of National Report forms. Nonetheless, the SG cautioned against any real hope of significant input from a broad routine request such as is found in the draft Resolution.

106. Stephen Hunter suggested that the draft Resolution should acknowledge the incentives Web site and provide its Web address. Max Finlayson suggested adding "and other organizations, as appropriate" to the text's mention of collaboration between STRP and IUCN.

107. The SG recommended that, if the draft Resolution is the only item to be discussed at COP8, incentives should be dropped from the Technical Session topics.

Decision STRP 10.18: The STRP noted the Working Group's report and acknowledged that the review of incentive guidelines requested by COP7 will not be produced for COP8, due to a lack of resourcing. The Panel endorsed the proposed text of the draft Resolution and agreed that incentives should not be included as a theme in COP8's Technical Session 4.

AGENDA ITEM 19: Working Group 5 on invasive species

108. Max Finlayson pointed to the two case studies tabled at this meeting, which were presented to CBD's SBSTTA and will suffice for that part of the STRP's tasks.

109. Concerning guidelines on invasives for COP, the DSG suggested that it would be unnecessary and confusing to produce specifically Ramsar guidelines, in light of the wealth of suitable material already or soon to be available, including work by IUCN, CBD, and GISP. He urged that 1) the STRP bring to COP8 an information paper on a "Guide to Guidance", including an introductory overview on invasive issues vis-à-vis wetlands and a short explanatory guide to each of the other existing

guidelines (GISP has agreed to draft this document), and 2) the COP be encouraged to adopt the CBD's "Guiding Principles" for its own guidance, to avoid confusing duplication and help to harmonize guidance to the Parties from the MEAs as suggested by the Joint Work Plan with CBD.

110. Jean-Yves Pirot (IUCN) reported that the Ramsar/IUCN project on invasives in Africa now has an updated agreement, and the first workshop is planned for West Africa in Nov./Dec. 2001, with another for southern Africa at a later date. The workshops will assist in producing documentation packs for site managers, and he urged that time be allotted in the COP for discussion of these. It was observed that no new issues can be brought for COP decisions unless distributed three months in advance, so no new resolutions could emerge from such discussions. The DSG suggested that either a GBF workshop or a COP8 side event might provide a good opportunity to highlight this important project. Dr Pirot suggested that a GBF session could evaluate the materials and also raise the project's profile, which would help with future fundraising for it.

111. The SG recalled that a draft Resolution will be needed, if only to urge Parties to use the CBD Guiding Principles. He expressed doubt about the utility of the case studies requested. The DSG noted that two case studies have already been produced and many more appear in the cited documents from other bodies; perhaps it would suffice if a list of these other case studies were to be supplied to COP8.

112. The DSG noted that the CBD's Guiding Principles have emerged from SBSTTA-6 heavily bracketed and the final form will not be known until adoption at CBD's COP6 in April 2002.

113. Harry Chabwela strongly objected to simply recommending the guidelines of others for Ramsar use, and urged that specifically Ramsar guidance be adapted from other guidelines, with acknowledgement, so that they can be tailored to Ramsar specificities and could be adapted by Ramsar as needed over time.

114. Concerning the proposed Guide to Guidelines, Peter Maitland strongly endorsed the value of such an aid for managers.

115. Geoff Cowan and the DSG pointed out that nearly all Ramsar CPs are CBD Parties as well and the Joint Work Plan provides for shared guidance to the Parties. Parastu Mirabzadeh (CBD) recalled that the so-called "CBD Guiding Principles" were developed with input from many international organizations, including Ramsar. It was noted that by endorsing use of CBD's guidelines, Ramsar and CBD national focal points would be encouraged to work together with common tools.

116. Harry Chabwela urged again that Ramsar managers should have Ramsar guidelines to help manage their sites, even if those guidelines are directly borrowed from other sources. This is different from simply pointing them to other sources.

117. The DSG inquired of the SCBD representative whether CBD would be willing to allow Ramsar to borrow its document, with acknowledgement, and adapt it for Ramsar with Ramsar formatting, etc. Parastu Mirabzadeh replied that SCBD would have no objection, and if Ramsar were to adapt the document specifically for site managers, SCBD would welcome that added value. Musonda Mumba (WWF International) drew an analogy to the way in which parts of the Report of the World Commission on Dams are being used as needed.

118. The Chair noted that STRP9 has already decided to endorse the CBD and IUCN guidelines, though that can easily be revisited.

119. The SG suggested a third alternative (in addition to endorsing the CBD Guiding Principles or repackaging them under the Ramsar banner), that COP be invited to adopt a Resolution endorsing the CBD Guiding Principles for Ramsar use, with an annex to the Resolution on how Ramsar managers can best use them in wetland circumstances. He invited the Working Groups on Invasive Species and Management Planning to draft the Resolution and its annex on "wetland management and invasive species" (not just Ramsar sites), with Tex Hawkins leading.

120. Parastu Mirabzadeh offered the assistance of SCBD in this analysis.

121. Marco Barbieri (CMS secretariat) outlined recent CMS and AEWA (African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement) developments on issues involving invasive species and offered to collaborate on this as well. As regards AEWA, invasive species were identified as a priority issue in the International Implementation Priorities for AEWA 2000-2004, and two projects under elaboration were expected to address this issue.

Decision STRP 10.19: a) The STRP endorsed the plan to produce an information paper for COP8, with assistance from the Global Invasive Species Programme, which will introduce invasive species issues and then describe each of the important existing sets of guidelines. The Bureau was invited to take the lead in producing this document. b) The STRP decided to recommend to Standing Committee that COP8 be invited to adopt a Resolution endorsing the CBD Guiding Principles for Ramsar use, with an annex to the Resolution on how Ramsar managers can best use them in wetland circumstances. The Working Group on Management Planning will lead in drafting the Resolution and its annex on "wetland management and invasive species", with assistance from the STRP Working Group on Invasive Species, and the CBD and CMS secretariats.

AGENDA ITEM 20.2. CIESIN and the Ramsar Data Gateway

122. Antoinette Wannebo (Centre for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University (USA)) demonstrated recent progress on the prototype "Ramsar Wetland Data Gateway", <http://sedac.ciesin.org/ramsardg/> and <http://sedac.ciesin.org/rivers/ramsar/>. She illustrated its impressive capacities to query on numerous parameters and receive data on Ramsar sites in table and map form, as well as links to textual background on the Web sites of Wetlands International and Ramsar. She also demonstrated the utility of the USGS Landsat7 view (<http://glovis.usgs.gov>) for reviewing recent imagery. CIESIN plans to link with this application as a tool to assist users in finding satellite imagery for Ramsar sites. She also introduced the UNEP-GRID Atlas of Global Change. Many of the sites under consideration are Ramsar sites, and time-series satellite imagery for sites included in the project are planned to be made available to the public. Such imagery may be of relevance within the Ramsar context.

123. Ms Wannebo concluded by inquiring whether STRP has an interest in encouraging UNEP-GRID to progress its Atlas of Global Change, and she sought guidance on how to deal with the issue of official vs unofficial site data. Boundary data has been received from UNEP-WCMC, but it's shaky to a large extent due to the fact that it had been produced some time back from poor maps submitted at the time by Contracting Parties, was supplemented with data from other sources, and was provided without metadata. She asked whether it is worth the time and effort to take steps to encourage the Parties to submit GIS data where it exists.

124. George Zalidis congratulated Antoinette Wannebo and CIESIN for this remarkable service, but felt that seeking to solve the boundaries issues before COP8 would not be realistic. He expressed his interest in the UNEP-GRID project.

125. Jan Sheltinga (UN Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat) inquired who is using these resources and why. She noted that the CCD has found problems with the scarcity of relevant data, and she was pleased to see how much data appears in fact to be available.

126. Ms Wannebo provided background to the NASA-funded CIESIN project and why Ramsar was selected for its pilot attempt. At the moment, there are no public users, for the site is still in prototype and, she thinks, will be launched at COP8. She expects that its audience will be policy-makers rather than site managers. Dwight Peck added that academic professors and students will also be frequent visitors, judging from the number of inquiries for just such data that the Bureau receives almost daily.

127. There was further discussion of the issue of how to handle official data (provided by the Parties) and unofficial data assembled from other sources.

128. Ms Wannebo asked for text for a warning about official and unofficial data to be added to the CIESIN site.

129. The DSG noted that CIESIN's work is helping to assess the suitability of Ramsar data and point the way forward as to what can be done to enhance their value. Ms Wannebo welcomed feedback on how to make the Gateway easier to use and provide help to users. The Chair queried whether training sessions could be provided, and Ms Wannebo noted that that is not part of the work plan but could easily be provided if additional resourcing were found. She pointed out that the Gateway is live (<http://sedac.ciesin.org/ramsardg/>) and can be test-run by STRP members, and she sought feedback and suggestions.

130. The DSG suggested that the CPs be notified about the Gateway and their feedback sought as well.

131. It was noted that presently the Gateway's Ramsar sites data is slightly out of date and a regular timely updating procedure is still being worked out. It was suggested that wording be added to the Gateway about the currency of the data. Ms Wannebo offered to provide a list of options for future Gateway development and sought STRP advice on it.

Decision STRP 10.20: The STRP commended CIESIN for the progress made in the development of the Ramsar Data Gateway and requested to be kept informed of further developments, so as to have the opportunity to provide advice on this matter.

AGENDA ITEM 20.1: Review of the Ramsar Sites Database

132. Scott Frazier (Wetlands International) illustrated the recent developments with the Ramsar Sites Database (RSD) managed by Wetlands International under contract with the Convention, particularly with regard to Web-based availability of site information and maps at several levels.

133. The SG asserted that, thanks to the efforts of Scott Frazier and the Bureau's Regional Coordinators, the state of Ramsar sites data has improved enormously over the past few years.

134. The Chair urged that greater efforts be made by the Bureau and others to promote the use of these tools to the public. Tobias Salathé seconded that, but also urged STRP to go on record as calling upon the Parties to improve the quality of their data.

135. Doug Taylor (WI) drew attention to links with the work of the WG on inventory – the data required for inventory and for the RSD are now separate and parallel, but will someday have to converge. Wetlands International considers that at some point changes should be introduced to

the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) format and the data called for. He acknowledged the large implications of changing a database midstream but felt it will have to be done someday.

136. The SG stated that if the experts believe that the RIS needs to be modified, it would be better to do it sooner rather than later, when there will be more Ramsar sites to be affected. He noted that either the process must be hurried, in order to be considered at COP8, or it will have to wait until COP9 in 2005.

137. Scott Frazier offered WI's advice on the technical side of change, but wondered about the political side: how will the Parties respond to new demands? The SG professed his belief that the CPs will accept the need for an improved RIS if they are presented with a clear case from experts.

138. Antoinette Wannebo inquired whether efforts were being made to contact Ramsar AAs seeking better data and maps. The SG replied that the Bureau has been energetically seeking better data for some years, with very good results, but the Bureau as an intergovernmental treaty deals with national authorities rather than with site managers. He reported on the French Government's intention to introduce a COP8 Resolution calling for a formal network of Ramsar site managers (perhaps by wetland type) and felt that that might supply a means to improve site data across the board.

139. Musonda Mumba (WWF) inquired about the uses of the RISs beyond the CP and Bureau level, since they have found that the data provided in the RIS is not always relevant to their needs. The DSG replied that RISs are frequently supplied by the Bureau and by Wetlands International to citizens and scholars inquiring about individual sites, by photocopy if necessary but increasingly by e-mail attachment as more RISs become available in electronic form. The DSG mentioned that changes to the RIS must be subtly made so that new data can be gathered without destroying comparability with the existing data of over a thousand present Ramsar sites.

140. Parastu Mirabzadeh (CBD) noted that the RIS can also be valuable as a tool for monitoring the ecological character of Ramsar sites.

141. Anada Tiéga observed that, in his region, the problems are less with the format of the data sheet than with the way in which Parties fill them out. He urged that better guidance be provided to the Parties. Several speakers agreed that the Explanatory Notes to the RIS need reworking. He suggested that, since we ask for revised RISs every six years, it might be confusing if we now change the RIS form midstream.

142. The SG assured him that CPs would be urged to use the new RIS forms for their new site designations and their six-year updates, but need not go back and redo new RISs for all their sites immediately.

143. The DSG noted that the frequency of six-year updating (called for by Resolution VI.13) is not working well at all – /over 500 Ramsar sites are presently without their six-year updates.

144. Tobias Salathé noted that one cannot only apply the stick and insist on good RISs – the Parties must be convinced of their usefulness as tools for management as well. He knows of European countries for which WWF has its own Ramsar site RISs parallel to the official ones, and he urged WWF to cooperate in working with the CPs to improve theirs.

145. The Chair inquired whether Wetlands International and the WG on Ecological Character could study the issue and recommend changes to the RIS within the COP8 agenda timetable. Max Finlayson replied that they could identify the additional data needed, but a redesign of the RIS format should be done at the same time and that might be more difficult.

Decision STRP 10.21: a) The STRP urged the Standing Committee and the COP to encourage CPs once more to further improve the quality of the Ramsar sites data. b) The STRP urged the Ramsar Bureau to take energetic steps to promote the use of the Wetlands International Web-based products from the Ramsar Sites Database. c) The Panel requested Max Finlayson to discuss the need for and feasibility of changes to the Ramsar Information Sheet (see Decision STRP 10.23).

AGENDA ITEM 20.3: Biogeographical regionalization

146. Scott Frazier made a PowerPoint presentation on the need for specificity on the question of biogeographical regions as part of Criterion 1 for designation for the Ramsar List. There is no consensus on biogeographical regions and no guidance for the Parties, but it is needed in order to set short-term designation targets under Criterion 1. He cited the Udvardy biogeographical definitions as an example used in other international (semi-)natural site networks that might be suitable for recommendation to the Parties.

147. Anada Tiéga noted that when Parties in Africa designate sites using Criterion 1, he insists that they specify what biogeographical region they are referring to when they claim representativeness or uniqueness.

148. Dave Pritchard observed that if one is designating a site based on species, the biogeographical regions will vary depending upon the taxonomic type. Is that not also true for wetland or habitat types?

149. The SG noted that Technical Session 3.1 can raise this issue at COP8 if needed. Any resolution on Ramsar sites could call for Parties to adopt, if they have not yet done so, the biogeographical regionalization system they are using when invoking Criterion 1, and the Bureau could then go back to see that that information is supplied. A new field could be added to the Ramsar Sites Database to this effect. (Continued in paragraph 165 below.)

AGENDA ITEM 11: Further from the Working Group on wetland management (continued from paragraph 62 above)

150. Tex Hawkins tabled the Working Group's further revision of the draft management planning guidelines and a draft of the key elements for a Resolution recommending them for the use of Contracting Parties. It was noted that the guidelines should refer to Ramsar sites "and other wetlands", and that it should be made clear that the new guidelines will replace the old ones.

151. The Group invited the Bureau to recast the Resolution into language consistent with the Convention's normal practice, as it will with all draft Resolutions.

152. Mike Alexander reported that the Group had responded to the earlier discussion of an overemphasis upon nature conservation objectives in the draft guidelines and has made a major revision to broaden the language. The role of stakeholder involvement has also been strengthened. The Group relies upon the Bureau to insert crossreferences to other Ramsar tools.

153. Anada Tiéga noted that the planning process has other functions and thus needs other indicators of success or failure; for example, in identifying and resolving conflicts among sectoral different strategies and/or policies.

154. Jan Sheltinga noted the increased emphasis on stakeholders and reported that the Convention to Combat Desertification also stresses a bottom-up approach, in particular in pinpointing the need to seek the involvement of women in planning, which is only broadly included in this draft. She suggested strengthening that aspect and mentioning that planners sometimes need to overcome cultural constraints in order to involve women. The WG agreed with her suggestions.

155. Margarita Astrálaga referred to the Guidelines' point that a management plan should not be a legal document and noted that, in the developing world, it is frequently urged to the contrary, that the plan should be enabled by legislation or a decree. She suggested that the point be dropped or

that a note be added to the effect that it may sometimes be appropriate that a plan should be a legal document. She urged that the Guidelines call for the inclusion of a map showing zones of restriction and use.

156. Mike Alexander agreed with both points and noted that the present draft does cater for both.

157. The SG suggested that, given the importance of this issue, the Working Group consider organizing a workshop within the Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF) to be held immediately before Ramsar COP8. He noted that organizers must do all of the workshop organization themselves, particularly since the Bureau will be very busy with COP8 preparations, but suggested that the Bureau might be able to help in other ways, for example, with support for delegates from eligible countries. He expressed the wish to circulate the Guidelines to the Contracting Parties for "informal" comment before they are issued as a Ramsar COP8 document.

158. The Working Group members indicated that they will seriously consider organizing the proposed workshop.

159. Max Finlayson suggested that the participation of indigenous people be indicated as a part of joint management, not just of the planning process. He urged that a definition of the "precautionary principle" be added to that section of the Guidelines and urged that the Rio definition be used. He queried the need to assume that conservation features are in an unfavorable condition unless shown otherwise. He found the distinction between adaptive and adaptable management to be confusing and still very debatable and urged deleting it.

160. Mike Alexander agreed that the Rio definition of the "precautionary principle" should be included and that the adaptive/adaptable distinction should be removed. He noted that when a site is gazetted, the assumption is often created for many people that it must therefore be in a favorable condition, which may lead to decisions that run counter to the precautionary principle.

Decision STRP 10.22: The STRP endorsed the draft 'Guidelines on management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands' in principle, as well as the elements for a draft Resolution, subject to further refinement by the Working Group and the Bureau, under the agreed timetable for outputs of the STRP (Annex 3).

Follow-up to the discussion on the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) (continued from paragraph 145 above)

161. Max Finlayson recalled the purpose of the RIS, which is to record information on Wetlands of International Importance, and noted that the RIS is not suitable for monitoring changes to a site.

Some fields need to be handled differently and specifications for maps need to be improved. He offered that, in the next few weeks, he would compare the RIS fields with the core data fields recommended in the inventory guidelines, and the Working Group would then make a recommendation as to whether the RIS needs significant revision.

162. He noted that the text boxes are not well handled by respondents, but that the substitution of tick boxes might become unwieldy. He called for the addition of fields in which respondents could identify the biogeographical region and specify the regionalization scheme being used. He suggested that, if a site is being called internationally important relative to its biogeographical region, an international regionalization standard should be used. He expressed doubt that the classification of wetland types could be revised within the timetable for COP8 documents.

163. Scott Frazier noted that the Regional Coordinators have requested that the RIS and Ramsar Sites Database include information on Ramsar site managers and, though that data would quickly become out of date, it should be sought more vigorously from the Parties.

164. The SG indicated a need for better technical guidance on maps of Ramsar sites for the Sites Database, and Doug Taylor reported that Wetlands International is presently working on both better guidance for maps and a revision of the 'Explanatory Note and Guidelines' that accompany the RIS.

Decision STRP 10.23: The STRP accepted Max Finlayson's offer to make a comparison between the RIS data fields and the core fields of the draft inventory guidelines, within the next three weeks, so that the Working Group can report to STRP on the need for RIS revisions promptly. Proposed changes to the RIS and the 'Explanatory Note and Guidelines' (to be prepared by Wetlands International) should be presented to Standing Committee for endorsement and transmission to COP8.

Follow-up on Agenda item 20.3: Biogeographical regionalization (continued from paragraph 149 above)

165. The Chair urged that further discussion of existing biogeographical regionalization systems, with a view to possible adoption for the Ramsar designation process, be included in the future work plan of the STRP.

166. Gilberto Cintrón noted that biogeographical regionalization is more appropriate for species; for wetlands, climatic factors can be just as important, especially for inland sites. For marine and coastal sites, there are existing climate regionalization schemes; for example, UNEP's scheme for use as a framework for the Regional Seas Programme could be adopted by Ramsar.

167. In further discussion, the SG questioned why, if it is agreed that the COP will not adopt any one scheme, STRP should seek to study the question further. The Chair expressed that view that, since biographical regions are mentioned under designation Criterion 1, further guidance should be provided to the Parties. The SG suggested that, in the traditional Ramsar Resolution on Ramsar sites, it should be stipulated that the biogeographical categorization used for Criterion 1 must be included as an annex to, or a field in, the RIS. The Chair felt that for a Criterion on international importance, a common international scheme should be used, but agreed that the Convention should not seek to impose any single scheme.

168. Dave Pritchard observed that the Strategic Framework (para.68(i)) encourages Parties to "determine biogeographic regions within their territory or at the supranational/regional level" and felt it would be appropriate to urge Parties to determine regions by reference to international scales but without imposing such a scheme by the Convention.

169. There was no consensus that further study of biogeographical regionalization should be pursued in future by the STRP, and no decision was taken.

170. Doug Taylor reported that Wetlands International and BirdLife International are collaborating in the preparation of guidelines on designating Ramsar sites based on threatened species, in particular threatened waterbirds. With BirdLife taking the lead, the goal is to draft guidance in time for COP9 (2005) rather than COP8, because there are complex policy issues involved and data issues require more time to be worked out.

171. Dave Pritchard observed that when the product is ready, it will include not simply guidance on how to designate sites based on threatened species but also analysis of such potential sites for designation.

AGENDA ITEM 21: Guidelines for the identification and designation of under-represented wetland types for the Ramsar List

172. The DSG noted that the original peatland designation guidelines had a preamble reflecting the Working Group's thinking on representativeness and Criterion 1; this has been moved to an annex for consideration of whether such guidance is needed.

173. Doug Taylor recalled that the karst designation guidelines adopted by COP7 and merged into the Strategic Framework raised many of these broader issues. He pointed to a generic problem for all the separate designation guidance, of having to 'reinvent the wheel' on the key question of 'what is representativeness'. He proposed that all general guidance on designating under-

represented types be gathered into one place so that it need not be treated for each ecosystem type.

174. Jack Rieley noted that site selection by most of the Criteria requires only yes or no answers, but Criterion 1 is different, especially in terms of representativeness. He reported that Richard Lindsay had authored the 'philosophical' annex to the peatlands paper and suggested that some of this material could be used as broader guidance for all specific guidelines.

AGENDA ITEM 21.2: Draft guidelines for the designation of peatlands

175. Doug Taylor reported that the latest revision follows the Bureau's recommended structure for guidelines much more closely. He noted the hard work of the International Peat Society, the International Mire Conservation Group, and Wetlands International in advancing these draft versions. He felt that the challenge is to add value to the existing general guidance for designation, to identify what is special about peatlands that requires further explanation. He pointed to the frequent problem of a mismatch between the ecosystem types under study and the Classification System used in the Ramsar Sites Database; one can't really count Ramsar peatlands *per se* because sites with peat soils are covered by many other wetland types in the Classification.

176. In further discussion, it was suggested that the threat of "excavation" be replaced by "extraction". It was suggested that "importance for archaeology" be added to the designation issues, but Doug Taylor recalled that cultural/archaeological concerns have been removed to the "Particular Issues" section since the site designation criteria are limited to the natural values listed in the text of the Ramsar treaty.

177. The Chair questioned why the Guidelines refer to both "peatlands" (a landscape term) and "mires" (a vegetation term), for the latter of which there is no separate term in Spanish. Andreas Grünig explained that there is a meaningful difference: mire forms peat, but the vegetation is the important thing and may later become a peatland; a peatland that has been drained is still a peatland but no longer a mire. Both are under-represented in the List. Jack Rieley noted that peatlands are 'fixed' (they are peatlands now) whereas mires are 'dynamic' (peat in the process of being formed). To omit "mire" would exclude many peat-forming areas.

178. Doug Taylor pointed out that, to a certain extent, the wording of all Criteria could simply have substituted "peatland/mire" for "wetland"; all basic guidance applies to peatlands as well. The draft Guidelines should try to avoid rehearsing all applicable guidance and focus as far as possible only upon the additional factors that are specific to peatlands. He also noted the importance of bearing in mind the larger context, at watershed level, and peatlands' dependence upon other

ecosystems; there is less value in an isolated site, more value when treated as part of a larger system.

179. In further discussion, Jack Rieley noted that the Group members could easily think of peatland examples for all of the Criteria. The importance of the word "intactness" (in English) was elaborated in the context of peatlands. The Working Group agreed with the SG's suggestion that brief site examples be noted, in order to show that the Guidelines are not pure theory.

Decision STRP 10.24: The STRP endorsed the Working Group's second revised draft of the peatland designation guidelines, subject to further refinement under the agreed timetable (Annex 3). Panel members were invited to submit further comment on the issue of representativeness for inclusion in a Resolution on the existing Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the Ramsar List.

AGENDA ITEM 21.1: Draft guidelines for the designation of mangrove and coral reef wetland types

180. Gilberto Cintrón (US Fish and Wildlife Service) noted that both drafts can profit by discussion during the Ramsar regional meetings. He observed that a need for designating intertidal wetlands has been articulated since 1992, and that calls for guidance on seagrass beds have not yet been addressed. He reported that draft guidelines on seagrass beds and intertidal mud flats have already been developed, though they are not yet in the agreed structural framework. He also described a draft Resolution on mangroves and aquaculture, which stresses the desirability of restoring mangrove sites following failed commercial ventures.

181. Gilberto Cintrón further observed that the present draft on mangrove designation follows the Bureau's recommended structure. He noted that, as with other wetland types, all of the general Criteria are applicable and that the text is intended to highlight the specificities of the mangrove type. He stressed the importance of reminding the Parties of the advantages of coordination with other environmental treaties, the most relevant of which are listed in the draft Guidelines, and that management objectives should be aimed to meet the broadest range of international obligations under other conventions as possible.

182. Several speakers suggested ways in which parts of the text could usefully be tightened or rearranged. SCBD asked for another round of comment, and the DSG noted that all of the draft documents on habitat types will be circulated for further comment.

Decision STRP 10.25: The Panel endorsed the content of the draft guidelines for mangrove designations and requested further consultation with the CBD secretariat and

other expert bodies. The STRP requested the Bureau to go over this and all of the other guidance documents to ensure editorial and structural consistency. The Working Group will finalize the document according to the agreed timetable for outputs (Annex 3).

183. Gilberto Cintrón introduced the revised draft guidelines on coral reefs, which also includes an emphasis upon attention to the objectives of other MEAs. He pointed to the need for designation within the context of other ICZM mechanisms and fisheries zoning. He emphasized the particular importance of monitoring for coral reefs, given problems with bleaching, etc.

184. Dave Pritchard drew attention to the point in the text to the effect that reefs which meet the largest number of Criteria should be designated for the List, but foresaw problems with that in principle. Sites that meet any of the Criteria should be designated and it would be misleading to suggest that sites which meet more than one are more important than those that meet only one. It was agreed that this whole paragraph (presently para.17) should be deleted.

185. Discussion ensued about the desirability of retaining the list of relevant MEAs within the document, in addition to the general point about coordination with them. Yara Schaeffer-Novelli felt the list is a useful reminder for the Parties of the need to work with these other legal instruments, and Gilberto Cintrón observed that Ramsar has MOUs in place with many of them and all of them are important, so managers should be made aware of them. Max Finlayson reinforced the value of the list but suggested that it be placed elsewhere than within the guidelines. The DSG observed that some of the MEAs mentioned are relevant to all habitat types and others only to coral. Dwight Peck noted that all Guidelines should be "timeless" in a sense, whereas a list of relevant MEAs would quickly become dated. It was suggested that the list of MEAs might better be placed in the enabling Resolution than in the guidance document itself. Geoff Cowan and Max Finlayson suggested that the list could be placed in the general preamble to the "suite" of guidance documents. Gilberto Cintrón suggested the creation of a general matrix or table showing the relevance of various MEAs to particular habitat types.

186. Yara Schaeffer-Novelli drew particular attention to the contribution of Arthur Dahl of UNEP's Coral Reefs Unit in developing revisions to the draft guidance document.

Decision STRP 10.26: The Panel endorsed the content of the draft guidelines for designation of coral reefs and requested further consultation with the CBD secretariat and other expert bodies. The STRP requested the Bureau to go over this and all of the other guidance documents to ensure editorial and structural consistency. The Working Group will finalize the document according to the agreed timetable for outputs (Annex 3).

Decision STRP 10.27: The STRP requested the Bureau to prepare a general preamble for the whole suite of habitat designation guidance documents, containing the general points that are common to all of them and need not be repeated in each. This preamble will become part of the draft guidance to be adopted by COP8 and should be drafted according to the agreed timetable for STRP outputs (Annex 3).

187. To the doubt that preparation of a matrix of relevant MEAs might be too large a task for completion within the timetable, Doug Taylor suggested that the Working Group leads each identify key links of this type, which would be quite simple for the Bureau to collate into a table.

Decision STRP 10.28: The STRP requested the Working Group leads to identify the most significant and relevant agreements and initiatives for the habitat types for which guidance is being prepared, by 15 August 2001, and asked the Bureau to tabulate those for inclusion in the preambular document to the suite of guidance.

188. The Chair returned to the suggestion that additional guidance documents might still be prepared for seagrass beds and intertidal flats within the agreed timetable. He saw no reason why that effort should not be made, as long as the normal process of circulation within the WG and circulation of successive revisions to STRP for endorsement could be followed. If it should be unsuccessful within the time frame, a good start would have been made for completion by COP9.

189. There was additional discussion of exactly what habitat types have been singled out by the COP, which have been discussed in previous STRP meetings, and which should be pursued at this time. Scott Frazier pointed out that some of the confusion among types and terms for them is inherent in the structure of the current Ramsar Classification System.

Decision STRP 10.29: The STRP encouraged the Working Group on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) to continue its work on preparing site designation guidelines for seagrass beds, acknowledging that this goes beyond the approved STRP Work Plan 2000-2002, in accordance with the normal procedure of circulation for comment and revision within the Group and the STRP, under the agreed timetable for STRP outputs (Annex 3).

AGENDA ITEM 21 additional: Draft guidelines for the designation of mountain wetlands

190. Musonda Mumba (WWF International) provided background on the Ramsar/WWF Living Waters Campaign workshop in March 2001, funded under the Evian project, which set out to clarify a definition of what mountain wetlands are and how they fit into the existing Ramsar classification system, with a view to proposing a Resolution and draft guidance document for COP8.

191. The Chair solicited the Panel's comment on the draft document but questioned whether the STRP should endorse it, since the subject did not emerge from the STRP's work plan.

192. The SG recalled that the STRP can receive and express opinions about any matters brought before it. The Government of France is involved in the mountain wetlands work and could sponsor the Resolution, but it would be preferable for it to come to the COP from the Standing Committee. It need not come to SC from the STRP, but the blessing of the STRP would help SC in its consideration of the document. Ms Mumba recalled that, though no Working Group has worked on the issue, one of the International Organization Partners has been deeply involved.

193. Geoff Cowan felt that in principle STRP should consider the matter. He urged a greater emphasis upon hydrological as well as biological issues, but otherwise supported the draft.

194. Peter Maitland wondered whether the designation of mountain wetlands does not already fall well within the existing general designation process. The DSG replied that, as with peatlands and other types, the subject is already generally covered by existing types, but they are worth singling out as under-represented habitat types in the Ramsar List, making it desirable to call special attention to their specificities. He indicated that the present guidance document would have to be brought into structural and editorial conformity to those for other types.

195. Max Finlayson expressed his willingness to consider the guidelines and thanked the drafters for their work. He wondered in general, however, how far the process of expanding the definition of wetlands under the Convention was going to go? Tobias Salathé felt that to a great degree the present document's subject is already covered in the Classification and is not an expansion, just a sharper focus on its specificities.

196. The DSG recalled that according to the STRP's *modus operandi*, considering matters of this sort is part of the STRP's normal review process of the Convention's science and technical materials. The SG saw no reason why the STRP could not express "welcome" for the document, if the members found no problems with it; if they did find problems with it, these should be discussed.

197. Randy Milton welcomed the effort but indicated that he does have problems with the inclusion of glaciers as a wetland type and would need considerable convincing.

198. The Chair expressed his reluctance to "endorse" the draft document, because of procedural issues and philosophical doubts about the content. He urged rather that the STRP "welcome" it and note its view that further work is needed, express its concern about the inclusion of glaciers, and

encourage WWF and the other drafters to ensure that the document's structure and presentation conforms to the other documents.

199. Max Finlayson felt that the document could go forward if the "extra" habitat types were removed from it.

Decision STRP 10.30: The STRP noted the draft document on the designation of mountain wetlands for the Ramsar List and recorded its opinion that further work is needed. The Panel expressed concern about a tendency to expand the definition of wetlands (in this instance, to glaciers). It encouraged the document's drafters to ensure its harmonization with the structure and presentation of other designation guidelines.

AGENDA ITEM 21.3: Draft guidelines for the designation of wet grasslands

200. Doug Taylor provided background on the introduction of wet grasslands by the Administrative Authority of Belgium to the list of under-represented types requiring special guidance. Wetlands International feels that this issue should not go forward, because it is difficult to see any added value to specific guidance that is not included in the existing general guidance. He suggested that instead a paragraph on managed wet grasslands be extracted from the present draft for addition to the Strategic Framework.

201. Tobias Salathé noted that, nonetheless, managed wet grasslands are a reality and suggested that, rather than be abandoned, the subject should be revisited in the context of further work on agriculture and wetlands. Doug Taylor agreed with that point and agreed to take the lead in drafting a paragraph for the Strategic Framework.

Decision STRP 10.31: The STRP determined to recommend to Standing Committee that the proposed specific designation guidance on wet grasslands should not go forward. The Panel requested Wetlands International to draft a relevant paragraph on managed wet grasslands for inclusion in the existing Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the Ramsar List. It requested the Bureau to inform the Administrative Authority in Belgium of this recommendation and seek its views, inform the Standing Committee, and recommend an alteration to the title of the Technical Session 3.2.

202. Dave Pritchard raised the question of a confusion of objectives in all of these specific habitat guidelines. They serve a purpose in clarifying aspects of the existing guidance, but if they are meant to increase the presence of under-represented types in the List, they don't really help. He suggested that the preambular note for the "suite" of guidance would be a good opportunity to

define the under-representation problem and the role of these guidelines in addressing it, with a consideration of the representativeness question as well.

203. The Chair invited Dave Pritchard to assist the Bureau in drafting the preambular section, then to be circulated to the STRP for advice and endorsement.

AGENDA ITEM 22: Interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2

204. The Chair drew attention to the draft paper on "urgent national interest" and "compensation" prepared by IUCN's Environmental Law Centre and noted the opportunity for STRP to give advice on this important issue.

205. Dave Pritchard outlined BirdLife International's participation in Standing Committee's discussion of these issues and reiterated his interest in the additional question of boundary changes "for reasons other than urgent national interest", for example, because of evolving standards of precision. He pointed to links with Agenda item 14 on ecological quality and noted that the question exposes structural issues within the Convention – e.g., the treaty seems to call for compensation rather than remedy, whereas the best answer for a troubled site may be a scientific and technical question as well as a policy question.

206. The DSG invited the Panel to consider the document further and forward any comments to the Bureau for consideration in revising the paper for Standing Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 23: Proposed changes to the *modus operandi* of the STRP

207. The DSG recalled the many questions raised by STRP9 in light of the nature and amount of work included in the present Work Plan, and noted that, in response to Dave Pritchard's intervention outlining the STRP Chair's report to Standing Committee 25, SC called for a paper outlining possible improvements. Decision SC25-11 established a Subgroup on the STRP which was charged to

- prepare Terms of Reference for the Chair and members of the STRP and guidelines on the role and functioning of the STRP in relation to these TORs, as well as the role of observer organizations and invited experts;
- review the role of the STRP National Focal Points and, as appropriate, recommend changes to the existing Terms of Reference of these focal points so as to ensure that they can contribute fully to the work of the STRP;
- make recommendations for a procedure designed to establish greater continuity of membership in the STRP;

- make recommendations for a process designed to make available to COP8 (and subsequent COPs) a clear understanding of the full list of tasks it has under consideration for the future work of STRP, so as to assist the COP in its determination of Resolutions and Recommendations relating to this work;
- make recommendations on the schedule of meetings of the STRP during the next triennium, and in particular the timing of its first meeting, so as to maximize the time available to STRP to develop and undertake its programme of work; and
- review the financial and other resource implications of the recommendations and proposals relating to the *modus operandi* of the STRP, and make recommendations concerning resourcing of the work relating to the STRP.

208. The DSG stressed the STRP's original purpose of "reviewing" scientific matters in order to advise SC, the COP, and the Bureau, but he also noted the need for a strategic role in looking forward to emerging issues, rather than just reacting to COP requests.

209. The DSG highlighted a few of the recommendations in the draft revised *modus operandi*, e.g., creation of a Vice Chair role to help to spread the Chair's work load; the suggestion that for most weighty matters a major expert be brought in to draft a documents for STRP's review, rather than relying overmuch upon volunteer efforts; that continuity be ensured by turning over only half the Panel's membership each triennium, with names to be recommended to SC by the Chair based on a proven ability and willingness to participate meaningfully and the ability to contribute in English (given the lack of resources for interpretation). He recommended that a tentative work plan be outlined before the STRP nominations for the next COP so that needed areas of expertise can be taken into account. He suggested that the SC choose the STRP Chair at its first meeting while still at the COP, so that the new Chair can get under way immediately in preparing for the first STRP meeting to be held some months later. He urged that cooperation with other MEAs' subsidiary bodies be built into the STRP's work plan.

210. The DSG noted that resourcing is a compelling issue, both for the STRP's work and for the Bureau's coordinating role. He urged that budgeting foresee 1) continued support for STRP delegates from eligible countries, 2) funding for expert input, and 3) travel for the Chair and Vice Chair. He raised the question of the desirability of the present structure of STRP meetings (preparatory workshops followed by plenaries) in relation to the workloads for the Panel.

211. The SG noted that presently the COP elects the STRP members based upon the SC's proposals drawn from candidates nominated by the Parties. Thus, though in effect SC is choosing the members, election is finalized before the new STRP's programme of work is known. He urged that Standing Committee choose the STRP members directly, based upon the expertise sought.

212. The SG also suggested that the appointed STRP members be asked to make a written commitment to devote a certain amount of their time to STRP work (e.g., 20 days per year, to include the annual week of meetings), with agreement of their institutions. We have one STRP member who has never attended a meeting, which wastes one slot which might have been filled with appropriate expertise.

213. The DSG urged that all STRP members make a point of participating in all agenda matters for review, not just in those within their own areas of expertise.

214. Dave Pritchard congratulated the Bureau on the draft document. He was concerned about the issue of matching expertise to the work programme, but agreed that in practice much of the upcoming work can be foreseen. He saw invited experts as a necessary means to filling any gaps in available expertise. He proposed that SC should be able to add observers and organizations to the composition of STRP, beyond those observers invited in the COP's Resolution, whenever gaps in needed expertise may be perceived. He asked whether additional observers can be included in STRP by virtue of MOUs with the Bureau.

215. The SG replied that observers are so only by virtue of the COP's Resolution. Other individuals and organizations can always be invited for their expertise on particular issues, but not necessarily for all issues. He urged that STRP should remain sensitive to geographical balance, since it's often easier to draw upon North American and European expertise, thus perhaps skewing the direction of the Panel's advice.

216. Max Finlayson expressed support for the ideas in the draft *modus operandi* but urged that the document be much shorter. Referring to the draft, he wondered why the SC should choose WG leads rather than the Group members themselves; why WG leads should not participate in drafting; whether the stipulation that WG leads might need to represent the STRP before other bodies should not be spelt out in terms of the burden of that commitment; whether the Bureau's role should not be "assistance" to STRP rather than "oversight"; whether the suggestion that NFPs be preferred for STRP membership should not just be deleted.

217. Stephen Hunter agreed that the SC need not appoint Group leads. There was further discussion on whether leads should be precluded from drafting, lest it become more difficult for them to lead a review of the drafts and make needed changes.

218. In further discussion, it was agreed to delete the first of the draft TOR for STRP members and add the 'review' role to the second items. Though some felt it is more common in scientific bodies for the Chairs to be chosen by their peers, it was agreed that because Standing Committee meets

at the end of each COP and the first STRP meeting would not take place for several months afterward, a significant gain in time would be made by tasking SC to choose the Chair.

219. To the question of who chooses external experts and decides when they are necessary, it was agreed that the STRP should identify when it needs an invited expert and select the best person to be contacted.

220. The SG expressed his doubts about focusing too strictly upon returning to the "review" role of STRP, rather than including the production of documents as well; he felt that a purely review role might be a luxury for an under-resourced convention.

221. Jan Sheltinga noted that the Convention to Combat Desertification, for its COP5, is seeking ways to improve the efficiency of its Committee on Science and Technology. Based on that experience, she raised the issue of the Chair's institution being made aware of the time commitments necessary, which might exclude developing countries' assuming the Chair, and she saw in the draft text no procedure for replacing an STRP member. It was agreed that it be recommended that Standing Committee, by correspondence, should fill any gaps in memberships that may occur.

222. The DSG noted that if regular members are to be limited to two triennial terms on the Panel and the Chair should be chosen from the returning half of the membership, it follows that the Chair will *ipso facto* be limited to one term as Chair.

Decision STRP 10.32: The STRP endorsed the draft proposal for the *modus operandi* of the STRP, with the amendments discussed, and urged that the document be significantly shortened.

223. The SG indicated that the revised draft will now go to Standing Committee's Subgroup on the STRP and thence to SC; there will not be time for STRP to have another opportunity for comment.

AGENDA ITEM 23.2: STRP National Focal Points

224. The DSG reported that the list of STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) appointed by the Parties was growing only slowly – presently 65 Parties have named NFPs. An e-mail discussion group ("list serve") has been established for the NFPs and the present meeting's agenda papers were made available on the list's server for the NFPs' retrieval using the GET command. He noted that there are presently separate lists for STRP and the NFPs and the desirability of merging them will be assessed.

225. The DSG urged that the regional STRP members take contact with the NFPs in their regions. Yara Schaeffer-Novelli requested that the contacts for the NFPs be made available to STRP members. Dwight Peck reported that these are available on the Ramsar Web site at http://ramsar.org/key_nfp_strp.htm.

226. The SG announced that an additional limited-term technical staff member, supported by the Government of Spain, has been employed to assist with preparations for COP8, chiefly by assisting the DSG.

AGENDA ITEM 23.3: Partnership with observer bodies and organizations

227. The Chair summarized the STRP's recent involvement in the work of the other expert bodies, such as UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and thanked the representatives of those bodies for their participation in this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 23.4: Strengthening links with counterpart bodies

228. The Chair referred to efforts to strengthen collaboration with the STRP's counterpart subsidiary scientific bodies, and thanked the representatives of those bodies for their participation in this meeting.

229. The DSG noted that though the *modus operandi* refers to reciprocal participation among chairs of the subsidiary bodies, representatives of the secretariats of those conventions are very welcome as well.

230. The SG noted that collaboration amongst subsidiary scientific bodies is also being pursued under UNEP's overall review of "International Environmental Governance" for reporting to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002. Some decisions on harmonization of the MEAs' work may emerge from that summit.

231. The DSG reported that discussions are now under way for the development of a 3rd Joint Work Plan with the CBD, which would become effective on 1 January. A review of the achievements of the 2nd JWP is being prepared for CBD's SBSTTA-7 and Ramsar's SC26. He recalled Marco Barbieri's description of the development of a JWP between Ramsar and the Convention on Migratory Species and its AEWA agreement, and he noted that there was been discussion of a joint work plan with CCD as well.

232. Jan Sheltinga provided an update on the work of the CCD's Committee on Science and Technology, noting its bottom-up emphases on decentralization and the participation of civil

society. She referred to the four geographical annexes to the Convention (with a fifth, for Central and Eastern Europe, to be added), and reported that 174 countries are presently Party to the Convention. She noted CCD's emphasis upon national action plans and observed that CCD deals more fully with socio-economic factors than do the other environmental instruments. In combating desertification, climate variations are addressed as well as human causal factors. She also referred to the priorities of CCD's subsidiary committee, which include benchmarks and indicators (including both implementation and impact indicators), traditional knowledge (with two ad hoc panels), early warning systems, evaluation of existing institutions and networks involved in desertification issues, establishing a roster of experts, and improving the efficiency of the Committee.

233. The Chair thanked the CCD Secretariat's representative for her explanation and noted several points of fruitful comparison with STRP.

AGENDA ITEM 23.5: Assistance to the donor community

234. The Chair reported that there have been no requests to STRP for assistance to the donor community. Doug Taylor reported that Wetlands International has been approached more than a few times by donors for advice on the Ramsar Convention.

AGENDA ITEM 24: Regional categorization under the Convention

235. The Chair reported that no requests to the STRP for advice on participation in other Ramsar regions have been received from the Contracting Parties.

AGENDA ITEM 25: Development of Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008

236. The DSG reported that comments have been received from the Parties on the 3rd draft of the Strategic Plan and are being incorporated. He will endeavor to harmonize the language of the implementation sections of draft Strategic Plan with the papers emerging from the STRP. He welcomed any further comments on the draft from Panel members in the near future. He said that a late draft will be used to produce a likely list of future STRP work mandates for the next triennium.

237. The SG indicated that STRP10's suggestions about future work to be added to its programme of work will also be taken on board in the draft Strategic Plan .

AGENDA ITEM 26: Draft report of the present meeting

Decision STRP 10.33: The STRP approved the draft report of the first two days of plenary sessions, subject to amendments passed to the rapporteur and editorial refinement by the Bureau. The Panel delegated the Chair to approve the draft report of the third day's meeting on its behalf.

238. After discussion, it was concluded that a further meeting of the STRP in this triennium would not be necessary. Further work can be finalized by correspondence.

AGENDA ITEM 27: Any other business

239. Concerning COP8, the SG expressed the hope that all STRP members would be present in Valencia in November 2002 and indicated that the Convention will cover the costs of those eligible for support who have contributed to the STRP's work. The Convention has a great need for informed assistance during the COP proceedings, particularly as rapporteurs for the Technical Sessions, but for other tasks as well.

240. Max Finlayson reported that Kluwer publishers has approached him and Wetlands International with proposals for a series of books on wetlands, and he solicited ideas for consideration. The series envisages one or two ca.200-page volumes per year. Kluwer is also interested in the possibility of producing an encyclopedic type of book, composed of shorter technical articles produced separately to be collected in binders. STRP members are invited to contact him with ideas for subjects to be included, and he noted that the publisher would welcome a gesture of support for these projects.

Decision STRP 10.34: The STRP welcomed news of the Dutch publishing house Kluwer's intended series of publications on technical wetland issues and wholeheartedly encouraged these efforts, and called upon Panel members to forward any suggestions for inclusion in the series to Dr Finlayson.

241. Mr Achim Steiner, new Director General of IUCN, joined the meeting to welcome the participants and express his gratitude for the close fruitful relations between IUCN and the Bureau, and especially with the SG. He is familiar with Ramsar issues from his previous work with IUCN and especially from his experience as head of the secretariat of the World Commission on Dams.

242. The DG spoke of the role of the environmental conventions; we are only 16 months away from the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which he felt is in danger of becoming a serious impediment to our work, rather than an opportunity. He observed that the WSSD has so far no centre, no core agenda; if there will be no vision to take us forward, the summit may threaten our work, politically, financially, and in public opinion. We must position ourselves as part of this

architecture, he said, lest our objectives fall victim to cynicism and lethargy and the forces that are intent upon sabotaging sustainable environmental progress. Ecosystems cannot be governed by national authorities alone, international cooperation is required, and the world must be induced to see why we need the environmental conventions.

243. Mr Steiner reported his surprise, at a recent meeting on water issues associated with the German Parliament, in discovering that many of the participants had never even heard of Ramsar. He urged that we work together to raise the Convention's profile and convince decision-makers of the role that Ramsar and the other conventions must play.

244. The SG welcomed Mr Steiner's words and assured him that Ramsar is active in remaining central to the Rio+10 process for exactly the reasons stated. He cited the "Ramsar and Agenda 21" report and the Bureau's participation in the WSSD "prepcoms".

AGENDA ITEM 28: Closing remarks

245. The Chair conveyed his appreciation to the Bureau staff for its work in preparing the meeting and creating a welcoming environment. He thanked all of the STRP members and observers for their hard work and insightful input.

246. The DSG expressed special thanks to the staff of the IUCN cafeteria for their extraordinary efforts. He thanked all of the Bureau staff for support before and during the meetings, and especially Mireille Katz for all of her hard work on the logistics, Dwight Peck for being rapporteur, and Delmar Blasco for his support and wise guidance throughout the meetings.

246. The DSG offered further thanks to all of the members, observers, invited experts, and representatives of other bodies for their knowledge and labor which have gone far to making this a particularly successful STRP meeting. Most particularly, he thanked the Chair, Jorge Jiménez, for his thoughtful guidance of the STRP's work, not only during these meetings, but throughout the triennium.

247. The Chair noted that this is the last meeting of the current STRP and said that it has been a pleasure to have been part of it. He hoped to see all of the STRP participants at the 8th meeting of the Contracting Parties in Valencia in November 2002. He closed the 10th meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel.

Climate Change & Wetlands: Impacts & Mitigation

Authors: Rick van Dam & Max Finlayson

Revised Contents list

Executive Summary (*Contents: see separate list of questions*)

1. Introduction

2. Functions of wetlands

3. Global summary

- Wetland distribution
- Climate change (observed & projected)
- Effects on wetlands & wetland species

4. Regional impacts

Africa

- Wetland habitats
- Climate change
- Effects on wetlands and wetland species

Asia; Aust/NZ; Europe; Latin America; North America; Polar Regions; Small Island States

5. Adaptation & mitigation options

6. Conclusions

Executive Summary: key questions on climate change and wetlands

Wetland values and functions

1. What are the values and functions of wetlands in the context of global climate?
2. What is the role of wetlands in the global bio-geochemical cycle and how do human activities affect this role?

Impacts

3. What are the key biophysical and socio-economic impacts of climate change on wetlands?
4. Do these impacts differ between types of wetlands and between regions?
5. What is the importance of climate change relative to the other pressures affecting wetlands?

Adaptation

6. What options exist to adapt wetlands to climate change, and which of these options complement or conflict with Ramsar guidelines on the wise use of wetlands?
7. Do these options differ between types of wetlands and between regions?
8. (Where are there inertial effects or thresholds in either ecosystem or institutional responses that need to be considered in developing adaptation options?)

Mitigation

9. What options exist to utilise wetlands in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and which of these complement or conflict with Ramsar guidelines on the wise use of wetlands?

[Note. A question also on mitigation of other climate change effects (eg flood control; coastal protection) may need including here; and clarification of the exact definition of "mitigation" in this context.]

10. Do these options differ between types of wetlands and between regions?

Robust conclusions and key uncertainties

11. What are the robust conclusions and key uncertainties relating to wetlands and climate change?

Timeframes for completion

15 Sept 2001	Circulation (full report & Exec. Summary) to STRP members (and external experts) for comment (and approval for sending to SC26); incorporation of comments
10 October 2001	Deadline for comments
15 October 2001	Final draft to the Bureau for editorial preparation in advance of SC26
1 Nov 2001	Distribution to SC members in advance of SC26
Jan-March 2002	Informal circulation to Parties for comments

Guidelines for Allocation and management of water for maintaining ecological functions

Working Group 10

Table of contents

1. Introduction - use of guidelines

2. Principles

3. Operationalising the principles

Objectives for Contracting Parties

Actions for implementing agencies

Principles

- Sustainability - as a goal (including precautionary principle)
- Clarity - of process
- Equity - in participation/factors
- Credibility - of science
- Transparency - in implementation
- Accountability - for decisions

Timetable

- Revised drafts to STRP10 Sept 2001
- Comments from STRP 1 Oct 2001
- Final drafts to Bureau 10 Oct 2001
- Standing Committee Dec 2001

Agreed Timetable for STRP Outputs

I. For the majority of STRP outputs

1 September 2001 Circulation to STRP members (and external experts) for comment by 15 September (and approval in principle for sending to SC26), subject to incorporation of comments as appropriate. Chair and Lead of working group agree incorporation of any comments. Chair to approve final draft.

30 September 2001 Final draft to the Bureau for editorial preparation in advance of SC26

1 November 2001 Distribution to SC members in advance of SC26

January-28 February 2002 Informal circulation to Parties for comments, subject to approval by SC26

March 2002 Finalization of drafts

1 April 2002 Circulation to SC Subgroups

6-8 May 2002 Final approval by SC Subgroup on COP8

II. Other outputs, if essential

1 February 2002 Circulation to STRP members (and external experts) for comment by 15 February (and approval for sending to SC), incorporation of comments. Chair and Lead of working group agree incorporation of any comments. Chair to approve final draft.

28 February 2002 Final draft to the Bureau for editorial preparation in advance of SC Subgroup on COP8 meeting

1 April 2002 Distribution to SC members in advance of SC Subgroup on COP8 meeting

6-8 May 2002 Final approval by SC Subgroup on COP8

Principles and guidelines for integrating wetlands into Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of principles & guidelines
3. Definition of the coastal zone
4. ICZM definitions & terms
5. General principles & practice of ICZM
6. Wetlands in the coastal zone
7. Wetland values & functions in the coastal zone
8. Principles & guidelines for integrating wetlands into ICZM

12 Principles (provisional)

1. The coastal zone is (almost) all wetland (as defined by the Ramsar Convention)
2. Wetlands play a key role in coastal processes
3. Wetlands play a key role in regulating water flows and water quality,

flood management; pollution; disaster vulnerability (natural hazards) management
4. Coastal wetlands are critical for many life cycles of migratory and non-migratory species, and many threatened species

spawning and nursery for fish and shellfishes; fish migration; waterbirds; turtles; manatees;
etc
5. Coastal wetlands provide multiple goods and services of high economic values

6. Coastal wetlands are important player in climate change and sea-level rise, and mitigation of their impacts
7. Wetlands are amongst the most vulnerable components of the coastal zone to degradation and loss
8. Coastal wetlands are easy to degraded but often costly/expensive to restore (and sometimes this difficult or impossible)
9. Integration of wetlands into ICZM is essential to achieve a fully integrative approach in ICZM
10. Mechanisms to resolve jurisdictional overlap must fully include the legal and institutional frameworks for wetlands
11. Many stakeholders use coastal wetlands (multiple use) and so must participate fully in their management
12. ICZM must be linked with basin/catchment management, and oceans and fisheries management

Timetable

28 September 2001 First draft for review by Working Group

15 October 2001 Revised draft circulated to STRP and external experts for comment

30 January 2002 Final draft for STRP approval

31 March 2002 Transmission to Standing Committee Subgroup on COP8 after Bureau editing and formatting

May 2002 Final approval by SC Subgroup on COP8