

**Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

**First Meeting of the Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative**

**February 3<sup>rd</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**

**REPORT**





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### **REPORT**



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**Thursday February 4, 2010**

**Opening and Welcome**

The meeting began with the speech of Mr. Ainsley Henry of Jamaica as representatives for the Caribbean in the Permanent committee of the Ramsar convention. He thanked the government and the people of Dominican Republic for hosting the meeting. He also encouraged the participants to give their best efforts in developing the agenda in order to promote the advance of the Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative.

The Senior Advisor for the Americas Mrs. María Rivera thanked the government and people of Dominican Republic for hosting the meeting, Danone Evian for co- funding the meeting; and the Caribbean delegates and the international institutions for having attended the invitation to the meeting. She highlighted the wetlands recuperation activities which have been made by the government of Dominican Republic that were evident during the celebration of World Wetland Day in the Boca de Nigua wetland.

Following the video “Nation without Borders” was presented in order to get acquainted with the state of wetlands in Dominican Republic.

Finally, the official aperture of the event was made by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Dominican Republic Mr. Jaime David Fernández Mirabal: In his speech Mr. Fernández reaffirmed his commitment to support the Ramsar convention in order to achieve the protection of wetlands because they are considered highly important for the country development and the world. Mr. Fernández highlighted the need to promote the international collaboration for the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative and the Caribbean Biological Corridor. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of the involvement of different sectors of civil society (political, academic, civil society among others) for the promotion of wetlands protection.

**Presentation Session**

The International Organization Partners (IOP's) and other institutions and organism who attended the event (UNEP, OAS, CANARI) focused their presentation on the activities they are promoting in the Caribbean region. The Ramsar Secretariat and each focal point illustrated the implementation state of the Convention. The presentations were given to each participant. The following paragraphs present a summary of their main points and reactions.

**Mr. Eleuterio Martínez- Vice-Minister of Protected Areas and Biodiversity of Dominican Republic**

***Wetlands in Dominican Republic***

Mr. Martínez described the inner wetland systems in Dominican Republic, among which figures: Bajo Yuna area, Bajo Yaque Norte, Bajo Yaque Sur-Hoya of Enriquillo, Ozama Wetlands (Brujuelas and Hugamo). Among the coastal wetlands one finds: Saladilla-Monte Cristy, Monte Cristy-La Isabela, Luperon Puerto Plata- Costa Atlántica, Boba baqui la Gran Laguna, Samaná, Los Haitises- Miches, Nisibon, La vacana- Obero alto, Macao-cortesito-Bavaero, Parque del Este-Saona, Cumayasa-Soco, Nigua, Dunas de las Calderas, Puerto Viejo, Oviedo, Manuel Matos-Ticaletón, Aguilas Pedernales Bay. Furthermore, the Ramsar site of Lake Enriquillo was described and the announcement was made that shortly the Minister will send the proposal of designation of the Bajo Yuna and the Ozama wetlands.

**Mrs. María Rivera- Senior Advisor for the Americas**

***Wetland for the Future***

The senior advisor for the Americas did the presentation of the Wetland for the Future (WFF) publication entitled: “Wetlands for the Future Fund: Benefiting Wetland Management and Conservation in Latin America and the Caribbean”. This publication presented the impact of the fund in the implementation of the Ramsar convention in the Neotropic from its creation in 1996 through the compilation of successful projects and lesson learned.

The Advisor urged the focal points from the Caribbean to increase their usage of the funds and presented their proposals before the deadline on September 30, 2010.

In response to the various questions from the participants, the advisor indicated:

- The grant cover up to 20 thousand USD to be executed in a year period.
- The secretariat allows for a progressive grant system e.i Argentina.
- The application requires a 50% counterpart that can be presented in kind or in cash.
- The Wetland for the Future Fund can be used to support part of larger proposals
- The fund can cover budget lines which are not covered by other donors, like salaries and equipment.

**Mrs. Lourdes Juarez- CONANP**

***Mexico's Experience in the implementation of the RAMSAR convention***

Mrs. Juarez presented Mexico's institutional history on the convention from its signature in 1986. In the presentation she highlighted the benefits that the designations of wetlands of International Importance have brought for the Natural Resource management in Mexico. Some of these benefits are the creation of new and broader governance spaces and support in the application of the ecosystem approach into management. She also invited the focal points to work and seek the secretariat support and services in order to increase their number of designation sites.

**Mr. Nelson Andrade- PNUD**

***RAMSAR convention and SPAW protocol***

Mr. Andrade described the tools of the SPAW protocol (Special Protected Areas and Wildlife protocol). During his presentation he specified the geographic region of its actions, the programs and thematic axis the protocol focused on. The presentation

highlighted the activities that the protocol have in common with the Ramsar convention and highlighted the projects they are currently working on.

**Mr. Richard Huber. Organization of American States (OAS)**

***Protecting Diverse Ecosystems: Economic Valuation of Ecosystem Services derived from Coral Reefs***

Mr. Huber showed the changes in mayor biomes during the last 60 years and the increasing tendency to adverse impacts for the communities. Mr. Huber presented the valuation of natural resources and the payment for ecosystem services concept as a plausible tool to diminish and restore the state of biomes which have been affected. He further presented project which illustrate the use of these tools and presented the Reefix projects in the Caribbean region.

**Mr. Amiro Pérez- Birdlife International**

***I Meeting for the Caribbean Wetland Initiative***

Mr. Pérez described Birdlife's work with other international organization and its formal partners in Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico within the Caribbean region. He highlighted the identification and characterization of Important Bird Areas (IBA's), which are greatly located within Ramsar sites. In this sense Mr. Perez suggested to the focal points to join efforts in order to use the information generated by Birdlife as an input to prepare the designation of Ramsar sites in the area. The presentation also included the introduction of the book entitled: *"Important bird Areas in the Americas: priority sites for conservation"*.

The OAS representative remark the importance of counting with Birdlife's information to develop a database for monitoring and other decision making processes.

**Mrs. Neila Bobb-Prescott- CANARI**

***RAMSAR convention for wetlands***

CANARI representative illustrated the work done by this institution in the Caribbean, its current activities and its work in training institutions within the area. The programmatic areas for CANARI are: forestry and livelihood, climate change and natural disaster risk reduction, civil society and governance and coastal livelihood and governance.

Once the invited organizations ended their round of presentations, the Senior Advisor for the Americas mentioned fundamental aspects for the implementation of the convention in the region, which were: using existing information, like Birdlife data, as input for the designation of new sites. This information could also be used by the focal point to update Ramsar Information Sheets and do monitoring on their existing sites. Furthermore, she highlighted the existence of the international cooperation and the need of avoiding duplication of efforts, and instead creating synergies that allow the training, improving communication and strengthening the implementation of the convention in the Caribbean.

**Implementation of the Convention in the Caribbean Sub-region**

Antigua and Barbuda showed its country advances with regards to the implementation of the convention and its priorities for this triennium. The country has one Ramsar Site, the Codrington Lagoon. Among their wetland management priorities are: maintaining biodiversity and the conservation of coastal ecosystems, promote the development of scientific and socio-economic research, public education and awareness.

Bahamas delegate showed the actual state of the Ramsar site called Inagua National Park, and the benefits wetlands provide to the community through its ecosystem services. He also presented the current activities oriented to the protection of wetlands, which include: continuing the inventory and assessment of wetland areas, continue with the designation of Ramsar sites and the development of management plans for the important bird areas.

Belize presented the management information of its 2 Ramsar sites the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary y Sarstoon Temash National Park.

Cuba delegate showed an assessment of the state of wetlands in the country and its main management activities, which included a study on aquatic birds. For its 6 Ramsar sites, the delegates emphasize the current creation of management plan, zonification and the creation of inter-sectorial committees.

Dominican Republic representatives highlighted the activities aiming to the implementation of the convention. Among which they highlighted the political will that is now promoting the designation of Ramsar Sites, the creation on inventories of national wetlands, capacity building for their personnel, and an increase on their communication, education and awareness creation activities.

Bahamas recommend that Dominican Republic gets in touch with the UNESCO Water Center to access information, which may support them in their activities.

Jamaica reported that as a follow-up for the implementation of the convention, the country has finalized its working plan for the triennium, increase participation and promotion of the wetland ecosystem through the celebration of the world wetland day.

Netherlands Antilles representative did a join presentation between the delegates from Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. The representatives described the current situation of the Ramsar sites in their territories and their challenges. The delegates highlighted the future use of an on-going territory planning study as an instrument to support wetland conservation.

Saint Lucia showed its main activities aimed at the conservation of wetlands, which are: world wetland day celebration, creation of synergies with several actors, communication activities, education and exchange of experiences. During its presentation, Saint Lucia highlighted some challenges for the implementation of the convention, which area: lack of integral vision in wetland conservation, lack of resources, and the structure that the institution responsible for wetland conservation presents. Beside, an emphasis was set on the need of providing wetland conservation with its due importance to avoid the lack of follow up which happens after these meetings.

Surinam showed a summary of the state of its Ramsar Sites and the institution responsible for their management.

Trinidad and Tobago representative described the wetland types that its territory shows, its resources as well as the activities aimed at their conservation.



## **Friday February 5, 2010**

During this day the representatives worked in completing the Initiative's format as per the request made by the Standing Committee 40. The methodology included the use of individual and group work tools to fill in the information gaps in the regional initiative's format. Annex I summarize the activities results.

From the above mentioned exercise it is worth highlighting that the difficulties in the region's communication are due mainly to the lack of personnel, the fact that the topics related to the convention lack priority for the person responsible for fulfilling them, and the language among other.

On the mechanism proposed by the participants to facilitate the communication among the members of the initiative are: the creation of electronic networks and contact's database to ease the exchange of information, organizing meetings annually or every 18 month among the members of the initiative.

CANARI suggested that a reminder should be sent to the parts with regards to the importance of having a regional initiative. Furthermore, support should be given to the exchange of experiences among focal points in order to motivate and learn from each other.

With regards to the support mechanism, Bahamas request for a diplomatic letter to be sent to a high level authority as an activity parallel to the communication with the focal point in order to obtain support and facilitate setting as a priority the convention activities among the agencies of each focal point. This petition was supported by Dominican Republic.

The Secretariat highlighted the daily contact with the focal points and mentioned that as a result of the decision made by the Standing Committee 40, the Secretariat had a formal agreement with each one of the regional initiatives. Hence, a communication was sent to the administrative authorities in Jamaica and Cuba.

## **Follow-up and conclusions**

The secretariat informed the following step regarding the Initiative: The Secretariat will send by February 10 the format of the initiative including the complement requested by the Standing Committee 40 and work during the meeting. Its comments are expected by February 19<sup>th</sup> at the latest in order to give enough time to make the final adjustment and that the documents can be send to the Secretariat by the coordinators Jamaica and Cuba by February 28, 2010.

Jamaica highlighted and reminded the representatives, the importance of obtaining the support letter for the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative in order to reflect more interest on its work

Regarding the issue of political support, the Secretariat agreed to send a communication to the contracting parties who have not yet send the support letter to the initiative, in order to submit it to next Standing Committee meeting in Georgia from the 26 to the 30th of April

2010. In the same way, the parties are expected to pursue the letters within their own governments.

Additionally, an invitation was extended to the international organizations and organism to manifest their interest in supporting the development of the initiative.

Another result of the meeting was the Santo Domingo Declaration which highlights the value of the Caribbean wetlands, urges the international cooperation to develop joined actions and request the support of government to the development of the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative (Annex II).

The meeting concluded with the gratitude words of the Secretariat for the work done during the last days and the closing and appreciation words from Dominican Republic and the participant countries.

## ANNEX I

### Summary of results of individual and group activities to reply to the complementations requested by the SC40

**Activity 1.** Individual questions regarding the identification of problems and solutions for an effective communication among the Focal Points of the Initiative and recommendations from International Organizations regarding communication between them and the Focal Points of the Initiative

#### Focal Points

1. In your opinion, which are the factors that limit an effective communication between the Focal Points of the Caribbean and the Ramsar Secretariat in relation to the Initiative.
2. Which mechanisms do you consider could be implemented to achieve an effective communication.

Factors that limit an effective communication	Mechanisms for an effective communication
Hierarchical division of tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual meetings or every 18 months</li> <li>- Virtual conferences 4 times a year</li> <li>- 2 focal points minimum</li> <li>- Virtual discussion groups</li> <li>- Develop an action plan that can be implemented with a specific schedule</li> <li>- Develop a report system (every 6 months)</li> <li>- Commitment with the process</li> <li>- Promote joint publications</li> <li>- Promote experience exchange spaces</li> <li>- Promote joint projects to solve joint problems</li> <li>- Create “brotherhood” of Ramsar Sites that have similar characteristics</li> <li>- Reiterate the roles of focal points and their functions</li> <li>- Create a Brief of the regional issues of the initiative</li> <li>- Direct contacts, not only meetings and conferences</li> <li>- Staff dedicated to Ramsar issues (with adequate resources)</li> <li>- Establish frequency in communications</li> <li>- Establish an open forum for Focal Points</li> </ul>
Ramsar activities have low priority	
Information flow is generally infrequent	
Distance between countries	
Limited human resources	
Technology glitches	
Multiplicity of tasks	
Unclear work plan, roles and responsibilities of focal points	
Language	
Communication may be unclear on what national focal points have to respond to	
Government procedures may require other agencies approval	
Geopolitics	
Clear establishment of national contacts	
Clear electronic directions	

## International Organizations

1. From your organization's perspective, which mechanisms would you suggest could be implemented to achieve an effective communication between the initiative's member countries and the international organizations.

<b>Mechanisms for an effective communication between focal points and international organizations</b>
Establish a CHM (Mechanisms for Information Facilitation) for the Caribbean with relevant information on wetlands
Identify a country coordinator that serves as liaison
Create a web page highlighting specific activities
Have a list of the FPs (coordinates and other contact info)
Multi-country proposal (e.g. economic valuation of RAMSAR site)
Define who to reach among the regional and international agencies working on the region (Database with information relevant to people that can be reached depending on the issue)
Create a web page for the "Caribbean Ramsar" and promote exchange of experiences and lessons learned
Updated and complete Database
Constant virtual forums, select a coordinator among the countries
Teleconferences
Annual meetings (face to face)
Create initiative priorities which respond to explicit needs of each contracting party
Communications (depend on efficiency of the structures and actions)
Inclusive Directive instances: implementing unit

## Activity 2. Format adjusting according to the SC40 Request

### Conformation of a governance/coordination structure

1. Propose an effective coordinating structure for the initiative.
2. Mention the operative terms or guidelines for initiative's structure proposed.
3. Name which other relevant stakeholders (governmental, non-governmental, intergovernmental, academy, etc.) related to wetlands who should participate in the initiative.

Structure	Terms of reference
<b>Estructura General</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Regional Contracting Parties</li><li>- Ramsar Secretariat</li><li>- Stakeholders</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Annual meeting</li><li>- Development of draft annual workplanning</li><li>- General reviewing and revising of strategies</li><li>- Inform the Regional Committee about the available budget, in order to finalize working plan</li></ul>
<b>Regional Initiative Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Coordinators: Jamaica and Cuba</li><li>- Regional Contracting Parties</li><li>- Stakeholders</li><li>- Ramsar Secretariat</li><li>- SC representative for the Caribbean (past, present, future)</li><li>- Members at large (language barrier)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provide complete information to all stakeholders</li><li>- Collect information from all stakeholders for dissemination</li><li>- Communicate to Convention and Secretariat</li><li>- Finalize workplan and budget</li><li>- Identify the priorities and establish subcommittees</li></ul>
<b>Small working groups</b> will be formed with participants under the Initiative to address particular issues of interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Prepare, monitor, manage, and evaluate activities based on established priorities</li><li>- Utilization of the Ramsar Guidelines</li></ul>

### **Stakeholders that should be invited to participate in the Initiative**

<b>Stakeholders that should be invited to participate in the Initiative</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- UWI (University of West Indies)/ CERIES</li><li>- DCNA (Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance)</li><li>- CCCC (Climate Change Center of the Caribbean)</li><li>- FAO</li><li>- OAS</li><li>- UNEP / RCU</li><li>- Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism</li><li>- SCSCB (Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds)</li><li>- CREHO</li></ul>

### **Activity 3. Development of a strategic framework for the initiative**

#### **Priorization of Operational Objectives according to the Strategic Plan 2009-2012**

1. Prioritize with the following operational objectives from the Ramsar Strategic Plan that you consider the Initiative should focus on.
  1. Inventory and assessment
  2. Policies and legislation
  3. Integration of wetland wise use into sustainable development
  4. Restoration and rehabilitation
  5. Invasive alien species
  6. Local communities
  7. Communication, education, and public awareness
  8. Designation of Ramsar sites
  9. Management planning and monitoring of Ramsar sites
  10. Management of water resources
  11. Collaboration with other institutions
  12. Sharing of expertise and information
  13. Institutional capacity of Contracting Parties
  14. Training

<b>Operational Objectives from the Strategic Plan selected through a prioritization process</b>	<b>Contracting Parties Votes</b>	<b>Areas where Observers can provide support</b>
<b>Objective 1.</b> Inventory and assessment	15 votes	OAS, Birdlife International, Mexico
<b>Objective 9.</b> Management planning and monitoring of Ramsar sites	12 votes	OAS, UNEP, Mexico, CANARI
<b>Objective 7.</b> Communication, education, and public awareness	10 votes	Stetson University, IUCN, CANARI, México
<b>Objective 2.</b> Policies and legislation	6 votes	IUCN, Birdlife International, UNEP, Stetson University, CANARI

### Workplan of the Regional Caribbean Wetlands Initiative (2010-2012)

1. Propose activities necessary to reach each of the selected objectives. Each group will find 2 activities to reach those objectives.
2. For each activity define: timeframe within the triennium, results/outputs, indicators and approximate cost.

Objectives	Activities	Year of triennium (1,2,3)	Results/Outputs	Indicators	Aprox. Cost (US\$)
<b>Objective 1.</b> Inventory and assessment	<b>Activity 1.1</b> Situation analysis - If assessment has been done in the country and if done (according to the Ramsar Guidelines)	1	<b>Result 1.1</b> Status report	Surveys, data from individual countries	US\$ 16,000 (US\$ 2,000/country)
	<b>Activity 1.2</b> Enable inventory and assessment where necessary or needed	2	<b>Result 1.2.</b> Completed inventory	List of wetlands, developed project proposals	US\$ 12,000 (US\$ 1,500/site)
	<b>Activity 1.3</b> Enable Regional Inventory for the Caribbean with existing information by country	3	<b>Result 1.3</b> Completed Inventory	Publication of Regional Inventory	US\$ 30,000 (Compilation, edition, printing)
<b>Objective 2.</b> Management planning and monitoring of Ramsar sites	<b>Activity 2.1</b> Ramsar Site Management Planning Workshop for Ramsar Site managers in the Caribbean	2	<b>Result 2.1</b> Trained managers on elaborating management plans for Ramsar Sites	Workshop finalized	US\$ 30,000
	<b>Activity 2.2</b> Enable the development/review management plans	1	<b>Result 2.2</b> Updated management plans	Number of management plans	US\$ 1,500/site
	<b>Activity 2.3</b> Technical Advise in Ramsar Sites for elaborating management plans.	2	<b>Result 2.3</b> In-progress Management Plans with adequate advise.	Finalized management plans	US\$ 50,000 10 countries x 5 advisors (e.g Mexico)
	<b>Activity 2.4</b> Enable updating of RIS	1	<b>Result 2.4</b> Updated RIS	Number of updated RIS	US\$ 250/site



<b>Objective 3.</b> Communication, education, and public awareness	<b>Activity 3.1</b> Enable every country to develop a communication plan	1-2	<b>Result 3.1</b> CEPA country plans	Number of CEPA plans for countries	US\$ 500/plan
	<b>Activity 3.2</b> Enable development of products	2-3	<b>Result 3.2</b> Communication products		(Depends on products, country, etc.)
	<b>Activity 3.3</b> Support pilot projects for public awareness in wetlands	3	<b>Result 3.3</b> Public awareness projects in place		US\$ 60,000
	<b>Activity 3.4</b> Webpage elaboration for the initiative of Caribbean Wetlands	1	<b>Result 3.4</b> Webpage of the Initiative developed and linked to the Ramsar webpage	Functioning webpage	US\$ 20,000
<b>Objective 4.</b> Policies and legislation	<b>Activity 4.1</b> Sharing experiences Workshop	2	<b>Result 4.1</b> Workplan for each country	Number of workplans	US\$ 35,000
	<b>Activity 4.2</b> Enable the development of guidelines within the different legal systems	2	<b>Result 4.2</b> Guidelines	Guidelines for the different legal systems	US\$ 50,000

**Priority Activities 2010 (year 1 of the triennium)**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Year of triennium (1,2,3)</b>	<b>Results/Outputs</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Aprox. Cost (US\$)</b>
<b>Objective 1.</b> Inventory and assessment	<b>Activity 1.1</b> Situation analysis - If assessment has been done in the country - Is it conform Ramsar	1	<b>Result 1.1</b> Status report	Surveys, data from individual countries	US\$ 16,000 (US\$ 2,000/country)
<b>Objective 2.</b> Management planning and monitoring of Ramsar sites	<b>Activity 2.2</b> Enable the development/review management plans	1	<b>Result 2.2</b> Updated management plans	Number of management plans	US\$ 1,500/site
	<b>Activity 2.4</b> Enable updating of RIS	1	<b>Result 2.4</b> Updated RIS	Number of updated RIS	US\$ 250/site
<b>Objective 3.</b> Communication, education, and public awareness	<b>Activity 3.1</b> Enable every country to develop a communication plan	1-2	<b>Result 3.1</b> CEPA country plans	Number of CEPA plans for countries	US\$ 500/plan
	<b>Activity 3.2</b> Elaboration of a web page to disseminate the Mexican experience	1	<b>Result 3.2</b> Mexican experience web page connected to the Ramsar web page	Functioning web page	US\$ 20,000

## **Annex II**

### **Santo Domingo Declaration**

The Contracting Parties of the Ramsar Convention in the Caribbean gathered at the I Meeting of the Regional Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Caribbean Wetlands in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 3-7 February 2010. The countries present during this meeting were Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. During this meeting we recognized the important role that wetlands play in livelihoods in the Caribbean be it cultural, social, economic and environmental aspects that these ecosystems play.

Considering that the Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty that serves as a framework for national action and international cooperation, as well as the wise use of wetlands and its resources, the Convention was adopted in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 and became effective in 1975, and it is the only global environmental treaty that deals with this particular type of ecosystem.

Also recognizing the environmental services that these ecosystems provide freshwater for human consumption, food production, habitat for flora and fauna species, irrigation, flood control and hydroelectric generation for millions of inhabitants of the Caribbean Subregion, and they contribute to the adaptation to climate change and the mitigation of its effects.

Request governments to demonstrate a greater commitment to the protection and restoration of its wetlands.

Urge governments to facilitate networking among civil society groups in the management of wetlands as well as regional and international organizations that operate within the Caribbean Subregion.

Recognizing the importance of land use planning regulations for the conservation of wetlands; request attention to the adverse impact of the indiscriminate use of pesticides.

Request the developed countries to support the Caribbean States in the initiatives related to the conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems.

Support the initiative of the Biological Corridor of the Caribbean, consisting of Cuba, Haiti, and Dominican Republic, having as permanent observers: Jamaica and Puerto Rico, and with the intention of participation of Martinique and Guadeloupe and urge the parties that are not yet part of the Biological Corridor of the Caribbean to join this initiative, as well as to join efforts with the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative and other similar initiatives in the Subregion.

Strongly urge the governments of the Caribbean to give all the support to the development of the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative as a mechanism for the continued implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Caribbean Subregion.

## **First Meeting of the Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative 3-7 February 2010 Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**

The First Meeting of the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative was organized by the Dominican Republic Government in coordination with the Ramsar Secretariat and with the financial support of the DANONE-Evian fund in Santo Domingo from February 3-7, 2010. The Caribbean Contracting Parties, International NGO's and other International organism were invited to the event.



Opening of the meeting (from left to right): Eleuterio Martínez (Vice-Minister of Protected Areas and Biodiversity of Dominican Republic), María Rivera (Senior Advisor for the Americas, Ramsar Secretariat), Mr. Jaime David Fernández Mirabal (Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Dominican Republic), Ainsley Henry (Caribbean Representative to the Ramsar Convention's Standing Committee) and Amarilis Polonia Director of Wildlife and Biodiversity, Dominican Republic Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARENA).



Opening of the event by Mr. Jaime David Fernández Mirabal (Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Dominican Republic)



Delegates of the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative's Contracting Parties and Observers





Dominican Republic Delegation



Meeting Observers (Stetson University, IUCN, CANARI, Birdlife International)



Nelson Andrade Colmenares (Coordinator- Regional Coordinating Unit of the Caribbean Environment Program- UNEP) presented the tools of the Special Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW)



CANARI presented its current activities and institutional capacity building work in the Caribbean





Participants worked in groups to determine the Governance Structure of the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative







Delegates prioritize the working objectives of the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative



Birdlife, OAS and UNEP delegates identifying the objectives in which they could support the Caribbean Wetland Regional Initiative



Result of the prioritization exercise performed by the delegates in the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative



Field visit to the Ozama Wetlands National Park





Delegates from Belize, OAE, Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia



Dominican Republic Delegates (Juana Peña, Ivelisse Figueroa and Gloria Santana-from left to right)



Nelson Andrade (UNEP) and John Bowleg (Bahamas)



Participants in the Ozama Wetlands National Park





Reading of the Santo Domingo Declaration

**First Meeting of the Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative  
3-7 February 2010  
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**

**Participant's List**

**Focal Points**

**Antigua y Barbuda**

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