

## SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

First Session: 7 May 1984: 09h00 - 12h15

Chairman: Prof. D.J. Kuenen

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference), Mr. M. Smart (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference)

Rapporteur: Mr. R. Lamb

Agenda item 1: Opening by Senior Representatives of the Government of the Netherlands

The Chairman opened the conference and introduced Mr. G. Braks, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Netherlands.

The Minister greeted the delegates and reminded them of the traditional role played by the Netherlands in the maintenance of dykes and dams as well as in drainage and reclamation of polders. More recently (particularly in the past 15 to 20 years) the ecological functions and values of wetland areas had received more and more recognition. He noted that the policy instruments which had enabled the Netherlands to be so active in this field included the Physical Planning Act and the Nature Conservation Act. Natural wetland reserves had been created both by the State and by private organizations and these now totaled about 50,000 hectares in the state sector and 85,000 hectares in private hands. The Minister, in reviewing the recent history of wetland conservation in the Netherlands recalled his Government's important contributions to the development of the Ramsar Convention. The Minister stressed the importance of the obligation under the Convention to make wise use of all wetlands, an element which had not received enough exposure internationally. He acknowledged that the Netherlands had, to date, listed relatively few wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance. He pointed out that this did not reflect a lack of interest but rather a consciousness on the Government's part that such designation was too important to be undertaken without considerable deliberation. The Minister indicated that his Government was now taking active steps to extend the List by the inclusion of more wetlands, and announced, to applause from the participants, that the Dutch Government had designated the Netherlands Wadden Sea for the list of Wetlands of International Importance. He further noted that consultations were in progress with a view to designating several other wetland sites in the Netherlands: the Oosterschelde, the Markizaatsmeer, the Oostvaardersplassen area and the Zwanenwater.

The Chairman thanked the Minister and congratulated the Government of the Netherlands on the news of this designation. The Chairman remarked that other Wadden Sea States would see the decision as an important development.

Mr. H.G.L. Vonhoff, Governor of the Province of Groningen (and President of the Council for Nature Preservation in the Netherlands) also welcomed the participants. He spoke about changes to the natural landscape which had been greatly amplified during the past 40 years. The fight to save wetlands was a significant part of the general struggle to conserve nature in the Netherlands and in the world at large, despite competition with other land uses and social or economic priorities. The Governor mentioned the Zuiderzee as an example of a wetland

which had diminished through damming and polderization for land reclamation and flood control. He also called for firm resolve to preserve the remaining parts of the IJsselmeer and to oppose polderization of the Markermeer. He spoke of offshore activities which posed problems when linked with operations on land across wetland sites. Though problematical, such activity might sometimes be preferable to unrestricted development offshore. The Governor asserted that planning and policy-making must proceed on a sound and convincing basis. By representing habitats and organisms which could not speak for themselves, he believed that the Ramsar Convention provided scope for a just and comprehensive approach to solving wetland conservation problems.

## Agenda item 2: Statements by International Organizations

Having thanked the Governor for his message and for his support for the Convention, the Chairman next read to the Conference a telex from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), informing the meeting of UNEP's wetland conservation programme, including several research projects and major publications. Though not represented at the present meeting, UNEP expressed the desire to be kept fully informed of developments under the Ramsar Convention.

The Chairman then welcomed the representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), the Convention depositary. Dr. Jane Robertson thanked the Netherlands' Government on Unesco's behalf for its enduring support for the Convention, and described work done by Unesco which complemented and strengthened the Ramsar Convention. The Unesco representative referred to the Man and Biosphere programme and indicated that two-thirds of the existing Biosphere Reserve sites included wetland areas. Natural sites listed under the World Heritage Convention included several important wetlands. Unesco reasserted its firm commitment to promoting the aims and goals of the Ramsar Convention. The Chairman thanked Unesco for its support which remained highly important and was much appreciated.

Mr. G. Child, representing the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), conveyed to the Conference the best wishes of the Organization's Director-General. He recalled the principle established at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, which linked the distribution and use of land, water and other resources to the need for ecological balance and environmental protection, in the interest of rural development. Applied to wetland management and protection, this principle implied that wetland conservation should be seen as part of an integrated system for environmental care in a region. Managers had to recognize links between wetlands and adjacent areas, pay attention to the benefits which protected wetlands could provide for local people and, where necessary, take steps to ease any adverse effects. In the view of FAO, the protection of wetlands was accordingly seen in the context of overall rural development, taking into account local culture, traditions and economic and social realities. The FAO representative stated that specific FAO interests in wetland management included the many African flood plains which provided seasonal support for fisheries, crop or livestock production and wild animal populations, and which might therefore require protection from measures which may alter flood regimes. A multidisciplinary programme to advance mangrove swamp management had now reached a stage where field action was under way.

Legal background work had begun, in cooperation with UNEP, to elaborate a Convention on the Protection and Management of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the East African

Region. The FAO representative looked forward to discussions arising from the Conference Working Group session on Land Use and Management Requirements for Wetland Conservation and other programme items, which he hoped the Organization would find useful and relevant to FAO interests in wetland management.

Dr. K.R. Miller, the Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), next spoke in broad terms of progress made by the Convention in recent years. He noted that there were 35 States Party to the Convention and approximately 300 sites covering 20 million ha. included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance. These sites formed a vital part of the worldwide system of protected areas envisaged at the Bali Parks Congress in 1982. Working closely with Unesco, FAO, the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) and – particularly - the International Waterfowl Research Bureau (IWRB), IUCN had maintained a degree of administrative and other support for the Convention consistent with the very great importance which the Union attached to this significant conservation tool. In performing continuing Bureau functions, IUCN had become increasingly aware of the need for a longer term arrangement for these duties and Dr. Miller urged delegates at this Conference to clarify such an arrangement in discussions arising from the draft framework document C2.4 and Convention amendment proposals document C2.5 (Rev.). Dr. Miller stressed that IUCN would, as always, remain available to cooperate with the Contracting Parties to promote the implementation of the Convention.

Prof. G.V.T. Matthews, Director of IWRB, spoke of the crucial importance of the present Conference to the Convention's future. IWRB stood prepared to continue to provide technical services to the Convention in collaboration with IUCN and was prepared to modify its own constitution, if this would better serve the Convention's interests and those of wetland conservation in general.

The Secretary General commented on the encouraging response to the Conference, reflected in the large number of delegates and observers present in Groningen. He drew attention to the four objectives of the Conference as determined by the Preparatory Committee: discussion of national experiences under the Convention, the discussion and eventual adoption of a framework to guide the implementation of the Convention in the future, the discussion of proposed amendments to the Convention and the opportunity to discuss ideas and problems of common interest for wetland conservation.

#### Agenda item 3: Adoption of the Agenda

The Conference adopted Document C2.1 (Rev.) as its agenda without debate.

#### Agenda item 4: Adoption of Rules of Procedure

The delegation of Sweden made a proposal that permanent Rules of Procedure should be elaborated for Conferences of the Contracting Parties. Meanwhile the Conference should adhere provisionally to the Rules of Procedure in Doc. C2.2. In case of conflict between these Rules and the terms of the Convention, the latter would prevail.

The proposal was agreed by the Conference which called upon IUCN as Bureau to develop and circulate a draft of permanent Rules of Procedure, to be presented for adoption at the next Conference of the Contracting Parties.

#### Agenda item 5: Appointment of Credentials Committee

The Chairman proposed and the Conference agreed that Mr. V. Koester of the Danish delegation chair the Credentials Committee, with members appointed from the delegations of the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland and Tunisia. He pointed out that although the Rules of Procedure only provided for three members for this Committee it would be useful to expand the membership to five to ensure a fuller representation.

#### Agenda item 6: Election of Vice-Chairmen

The delegation of Tunisia proposed that Mr. M.Y. Alaoui of the Moroccan delegation be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Conference. The delegations of Senegal and Mauritania both seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Spain proposed that Dr. R.P. Schlatter of the Chilean delegation be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Conference. The delegation of Norway seconded this proposal.

The Conference unanimously elected Mr. Alaoui and Dr. Schlatter as Vice-Chairmen of the Conference.

#### Agenda item 8: Presentation of Overview Address

Dr. W. Wolff delivered an address jointly prepared by himself and Dr. G. Noble on "The Ecological Importance of Wetlands" (Doc. C2.7). The full text of this address is reproduced on pages 181 to 190 of these Proceedings. In the discussion which followed, the observer from Malawi took note of the paper's mention of Lake Chilwa, a wetland very near the observer's own home. On his return to Malawi, the observer stated that he would undertake to encourage his Government to accede to the Convention and designate lake Chilwa as Malawi's first site on the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

The Chairman adjourned the session at 12h15.

### SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Second Session: 7 May 1984: 14h30 - 15h15

Chairman: Prof. D.J. Kuenen

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. M.Y. Alaoui Dr. R.P. Schlatter

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference), Mr. M. Smart (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference)

Rapporteur: Mr. J. Harrison, Mr. R. Lamb

#### Agenda item 8: Presentation of Overview Addresses (continued)

Prof. G.V.T. Matthews delivered a paper entitled "The Need for International Cooperation in Wetland Conservation" (Doc. C2.8).

Mr. P. Nowicki and Mrs. N. Nowicki-Caupin presented their paper entitled "Land-Use Approaches to Wetland Areas Throughout the World" (Doc. C2.9).

Mr. C. de Klemm completed the series of overview addresses with his presentation of "Conservation of Wetlands: Legal and Planning Mechanisms" (Doc. C2.10).

The full texts of all three addresses are reproduced on pages 191 to 246 of these Proceedings.

The Chairman thanked all the speakers, and called for questions and discussion on the issues raised in these three papers.

The delegation of Pakistan reminded the Conference of the value of the World Conservation Strategy and its application at national level. He emphasized the need for a pragmatic approach to conservation problems. These views were endorsed by the delegate of Japan.

The delegation of Senegal thanked the speakers for their informative presentations. He stressed the value of international cooperation. In Africa, problems both of drought and the economic situation made conservation work particularly difficult, and as a result it was important not only to expand the Ramsar List, but also to defend the sites already listed. He noted the threat to the Djoudj site in Northern Senegal and recommended that the Conference consider instigating a mutual aid fund which would help the poorer countries to protect their wetlands.

The observer from the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) informed the Conference of the Directive of the Council of the European Communities on the Protection of Wild Birds and their habitats which placed a number of obligations on the members of the EEC. These obligations included inter alia the designation of protected areas. He suggested that this Directive could play an important role in the member states, complementary to that of the Ramsar Convention. He further referred to the possible advantages to be gained by the EEC becoming Party to the Ramsar Convention. The observer from the EEB added that the EEC had an environmental fund, which could be used to purchase sites, and that the Common Agricultural Policy ought to be changed in such a way as to cause less environmental problems (i.e. the drainage of valuable wetlands) than in the past. He concluded by noting that the EEC had an environmental policy, and a programme for cooperation with developing countries, which could include the export of expertise in developing projects in wetlands in an environmentally sound manner (i.e. in conformity within the principles of the Ramsar Convention).

The Secretary General noted that an amendment to the Convention would be required to enable the EEC to become a Contracting Party to the Convention. This was not envisaged in the amendments that were currently being proposed by the Netherlands delegation. However, he stressed the desirability of complementary initiatives fostering the aims of the Convention.

The session was adjourned at 17h15.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION Third Session: 8 May 1984: 09h00 - 12h35

Chairman: Prof. D.J. Kuenen

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. M.Y. Alaoui, Dr. R.P. Schiatter

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference), Mr. M. Smart (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference)

Rapporteur: Mr. R. Lamb, Mr. J. Harrison

The Chairman opened the session and invited Vice-Chairman Schlatter to convene and chair a working group comprising the Spanish speaking delegates and observers to confer on the official Spanish version of the Convention.

#### Agenda Item 7: Report of Credentials Committee

Mr. Koester, the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, reported that of the 26 Contracting Party delegations currently present, 25 had submitted credentials for review by the Committee. The credentials of 20 of the delegations had been accepted, and it was proposed that the other delegations participate on a provisional basis while their credentials remained under consideration. The Committee proposed that the Conference waive Rule 3.2 of the provisionally accepted Rules of Procedure requiring that credentials be submitted 24 hours in advance of the opening of the Conference. The Conference noted the interim report and accepted the recommendation of the Credentials Committee.

#### Agenda Item 9: Overview Presentation and Discussion of National Reports and Information from Observers on the Implementation of the Convention

The Secretary-General introduced the item, which he described as a key part of the Conference. National reports had been requested from all Contracting Parties in advance of the Conference, but when the overview document (Doc. C2.6 reproduced in full on pages 143 to 180 of these Proceedings) had been prepared on 31 March, only 13 reports had been received. Many had been received since, but could not be incorporated into the review. Information had also been received from observers.

The Secretary General also brought a number of information documents to the attention of the Conference: the list of Contracting Parties (Inf. C2.1), the list of Parties which had accepted the Protocol (Inf. C2.2), the list of wetland sites which had been designated under the Convention (Inf. C2.3), the Directory of Wetlands of International Importance (Inf. C2.4), and the list of Administrative Authorities responsible for Implementing the Convention in each Contracting Party (Inf. C2.7). He requested delegates in particular to check the accuracy of documents Inf. C2.4 and Inf. C2.7.

The Conference was then informed by the Secretary-General that the delegation of the United Kingdom had prepared a draft recommendation concerning submission of national reports.

The Chairman then called upon Unesco as Depositary to summarize the current number of Contracting Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, and to report on the situation concerning the elaboration of the other official language versions of the Convention. The Conference was informed that there were currently 35 Contracting Parties to the Convention, and that 15 States had accepted the Protocol. The latter would come into force when accepted

by 22 of the Contracting Parties at the time of its adoption. The representative from Unesco also drew the attention of States which intended to join the Convention to the fact that there was a requirement to designate at least one wetland at the time of ratification or accession.

Regarding the different official language versions of the Convention, the representative of Unesco reported that Arabic and Chinese texts of both the Convention and the Protocol had been prepared, as well as a Russian text of the Protocol. For the Spanish version of the Convention and the German version of the Protocol there remained a few points to be resolved. The Spanish text was to be reviewed as reported, and it was proposed that the German version be similarly reviewed during the Conference.

The delegation of Finland announced that internal procedures concerning the ratification of the Protocol had been completed on 25 April 1984 and that deposit of its instrument would follow shortly. Similarly the delegation of Switzerland announced that the Swiss Federal Council had approved the Protocol on 1 May 1984 and had authorized its signature without reservation as to ratification.

The delegation of Tunisia pointed out that Tunisia had commented on the Arabic version of the Convention. As these comments had not yet been received by Unesco, the Chairman invited the delegation of Tunisia to discuss the matter with Unesco.

The Chairman then called on the Assistant Secretary-General to begin presentation of the Overview of National Reports (Doc. C2.6).

The Assistant Secretary-General introduced the paper, suggesting it be reviewed by section, and pointing out that his presentation would include items from national reports received after 31 March.

#### Measures taken by the Contracting Parties

After a review of the current number of Contracting Parties several observer states indicated their interest in becoming Contracting Parties. The observer from Costa Rica announced that instructions would be sent to the permanent representative of his country to Unesco to effect accession to the Convention. Two wetlands covering 18,000 hectares would be designated for the List.

The observer from France announced that ratification of the Protocol by France was imminent, and that an extensive list of wetlands would be proposed under the terms of Ramsar.

Belgium had signed the Ramsar Convention with reserve as to ratification. The convention had been approved by Act of Parliament on 22 February 1979. Designation of wetlands of international importance for inclusion in the List had to be made by means of a Royal Decree. A draft Royal Decree had been submitted to the Conseil d'Etat and the procedures had just been completed. There now remained no further obstacle to rapid adoption of this Royal Decree. Belgium would therefore be depositing an instrument of ratification shortly. In the first instance, 6 sites would be placed on the List of sites designated under the Convention, 5 in the Flemish region and the sixth in the Walloon region.

The observer from Argentina referred to the wide variety of wetland types in his country, and

the many important wetlands. Wise management and protection was needed. The National Parks Administration had under its protection at least three wetland sites which could be considered of international importance: Rio Pilcomayo National Park, Laguna de Pozuelos National Monument, and the Laguna Blanca National Park in Patagonia.

The observer of Mali informed the Conference that a report had been deposited with the Secretariat. He expressed the hope that Mali would soon become a Contracting Parties to the Convention. The Government had studied this possibility and had asked the relevant Ministries to speed up the process. He also appealed for assistance in protecting wetlands in Mali, in particular the Inner Niger Delta.

The observer of the USA reported on the increasing concern for, and importance of, wetland conservation in the USA and detailed measures taken there in the field of wetland classification and inventory, and in statistical sampling of wetland losses. He indicated that he and his colleagues hoped to resolve the matter of US accession on their return to the USA. He said they viewed the Convention as the existing international vehicle for conserving wetlands; it was a major tool for international cooperation and mutual assistance and a framework sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of many countries. However, strong technical and scientific orientation was needed.

The observer of Chad deplored the fact that the recent war had hindered accession to the Convention by his country, which laid particular importance on wise use of water resources. This was particularly important in Lake Chad, which lay in the territory not only of Chad, but also Cameroun, Niger and Nigeria. He described the wetlands and waterfowl of Chad and requested international assistance for their conservation.

The observer of Nigeria noted the great problems posed by agricultural expansion, aridity and population pressure within his country. The observer added that his country was nominating a site for inscription under the World Heritage Convention. Now that Nigeria was aware of the Ramsar Convention, consideration would be given to accession. However assistance was required in training, and in gathering information on bird populations and their roles and migrations, as well as on the management of these resources.

Extension of the area of listed sites was then discussed. The delegation of Norway indicated that a revised map of Åkersvika, showing the new boundaries of the extended site, would be submitted to IUCN.

The Assistant Secretary-General then reviewed additions to the List of wetlands of international importance, noting that the latest addition, the Sine-Saloum delta in Senegal, was the 292nd site designated. The delegations of several Contracting Parties then indicated their intention of adding further wetlands.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany announced that consultations between the Federal Government and governments of the Länder were essential; such consultations were under way, and listing of a new site was to be expected.

The delegation of Finland indicated that designation of further areas was under consideration, involving 10 bays in the Baltic covering 21,000 hectares and 17 inland lakes covering 13,000 hectares.



The delegation of Italy informed the Conference that the regional government of Lombardia had approved designation of seven more sites, while an additional site in Sicily would also be listed.

The delegation of Australia remarked that in his country, as in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Convention had proved effective in a federal system. He announced that part of the Macquarie marshes in New South Wales was to be designated, possibly including a large area outside the nature reserve itself.

The United Kingdom delegation announced that a total of 132 wetlands eligible for designation under the Cagliari criteria had been identified: 19 of these had already been designated, ten more would be designated very shortly, and nearly all would be listed by 1986.

The delegation of Norway recalled that at the time of the 1974 Heiligenhafen conference, Norway had had 20 wetland reserves, in 1980, at the time of the Cagliari Conference 107, and at present 346. He noted that, on the basis of the Cagliari criteria, refined criteria had been drawn up for the Nordic countries, and further detailed national criteria had been developed. This had led to the development of a first list of Norwegian wetlands of international importance. The delegation of Norway announced that Norway was now ready to add eight more sites covering about 14,000 hectares to the List.

The delegate of Portugal announced that his country was prepared to add by the end of the year a further site on the Sado River, south of Lisbon, with a total of 22,700 hectares.

The delegate of Mauritania announced that Mauritania was about to add a further site on the Senegal River, with an area of 12,000 hectares.

The delegate from Senegal, in reply to a point raised by the Assistant Secretary-General, noted that the failure to list the Guembeul area at the same time as the Saloum Delta was a purely administrative problem, and that this site would be listed shortly.

The delegation from Canada announced that two additional sites were about to be designated for the List under the Convention, the St. Clair National Wildlife Area in Ontario, and the Chignecto National Wildlife Area in the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany informed the Conference that the Länder of Schleswig-Holstein and of Lower Saxony were each intending to set up a national park in the Wadden Sea. It was hoped that these plans would succeed, and that subsequently areas of the Wadden Sea in Schleswig-Holstein could be listed under the Convention.

In reply to a question, the Secretary General noted that additions to the List need not be made through Unesco, but could be sent direct to IUCN as the body responsible for continuing bureau functions.

Attention was drawn to recent scientific investigations which had highlighted the importance of four African wetlands, all of which appeared eligible for designation. A recent aerial survey of the Sahel had shown the significance of the Lac de Mâl and Lac Aleg in Mauritania, even in time of drought. The Oued Massa in Morocco was another major site where scientific investigations and conservation measures were under way. Recent studies

had confirmed the importance of the tidal Gulf of Gabès in southern Tunisia.

Recalling that the Cagliari Conference had identified peatlands as a habitat type poorly represented in the Convention List, the delegation of Finland indicated that his Government intended to designate wetlands of this type for the List.

The review of additions to the List thus completed, it was pointed out that, to date, no Party had deleted a wetland from the List of wetlands of international importance. This was an indication that the Parties regarding listing as a binding commitment which they were unwilling to break. Restriction of the boundaries of listed wetlands had occurred on only a few occasions, and the Parties seemed as unwilling to restrict boundaries as to delete sites.

In discussion of site descriptions, the delegation of the Netherlands intervened to ask if the designation of Spit and Swan Island in Australia had been motivated by the wish to conserve that site's parrot population: he expressed doubts about the classification of parrots as waterfowl. The Australian delegation replied that, being dependent on wetlands, Orange-Bellied Parrots satisfied the Convention's criteria: this, he stated, was an apt example of the flexibility previously mentioned.

#### Changes in Status of Wetlands Designated on the List

It was noted that changes could affect either legal status or ecological character of wetlands: Contracting Parties had been very flexible in their approach to the legal status of listed wetlands. Some had listed only sites with full legal protection; others took the view that sites with little or no statutory protection could be listed, on the assumption that legal status would be afforded later. The national reports, he said, presented information on increased legal protection of listed sites.

The Assistant Secretary-General then turned to changes in ecological character. He recalled that the major specific obligation accepted by Contracting Parties was to designate sites for the list, and that this designation implied avoiding change in ecological character of listed wetlands. He referred to the provision in the Convention text for Contracting Parties to report such change, or the likelihood of such change, to IUCN as the body responsible for continuing bureau functions, and noted that such reports had been made only on two occasions between Conferences of the Parties. Review of changes in ecological character was therefore an important task for the Conference. He drew particular attention to the important positive changes at Doñana in Spain and Hornborgasjön in Sweden.

The delegation of Senegal congratulated the Conference on the wide participation of countries from developing regions. He cautioned that, while designation of new sites was important, protection of existing sites was even more so. He referred to the drop in rural income which 10 years of drought had occasioned in Senegal, forcing the Government to impose emergency water management policies, including the damming of rivers and the pumping out of waterholes to raise agricultural productivity and provide drinking water. Dams on the Senegal and Gambia Rivers had had, or threatened to have, considerable negative environmental impact. The Diama Dam, projected for completion in 1986, was likely to affect ecological status of wetlands in the whole Senegal River valley. Already however the temporary earth dam 20 km upstream from the Djoudj National Park gave cause for grave concern; this would normally be carried away by the annual flood, due in August, but if the drought should continue, the dam was likely to be strengthened, thus depriving the

Lower Senegal valley of water for the first time. The Government was aware of the problem but lacked ways and means to take conservation action. The delegation called for a solidarity fund to assist constructive intervention in problems of this kind. The immediate requirement was the digging of a channel 14 km in length from the earth dam to Djoudj to ensure a supply of fresh water in the Park: this would cost 70 million CFA francs. In the long term, measures such as construction of embankments to safeguard Djoudj from the effects of the Diama dam would cost 350 million CFA francs. The delegation suggested that this type of intervention might provide a test case bearing on other semi-arid wetlands.

The Chairman recognized the seriousness of the Senegalese situation and expressed the Conference's concern and sympathy. He asked that the delegation put the case in written form to the Bureau so that it had a basis for considering further action.

The delegation of Spain informed the Conference of the critical situation of the Daimiel National Park, where there had been an exponential increase in exploitation of the underground aquifer for irrigation. This had formerly been one of the only wet areas in central Spain. But hydrological studies suggested it might disappear altogether without heavy rainfall. In answer to a question from the Chair, the delegation from Spain responded that the situation at Daimiel was clearly caused by man's intervention and not by natural conditions.

The delegation from Tunisia asserted that, while problems in wetland conservation arose because of variable rainfall, the increasing water needs of a fast-growing human population were the background to wetland conservation. This combination was characteristic of many developing countries. In the case of Tunisia, the delegation cited the example of the construction of dams on certain wadis draining into Lake Ichkeul, in response to the water requirements of the local population, and irrigation needs. He added that there was a problem of priorities in developing countries where the main objective is to achieve self-sufficiency in food production. Since 1982, Tunisia had collaborated with IWRB, University College (London), and the Ministry of the Environment of France in the development of an important impact assessment study at Ichkeul, the first study of its kind to be undertaken for a wetland in the region. The more information emerged from this study, the more complex the situation appeared. The original plan to install a simple sluice to retain fresh water was found to be inadequate, so the building of a dike across the lake had to be envisaged. The cost of the engineering work involved had risen from \$20,000 to \$3,000,000 and there was still no guarantee that these measures would finally result in conservation of the site in its former state. Though sympathetic to wetland conservation, Tunisia did not have unlimited funds for proper management measures.

The observer from IWRB commented that the situations just described at Djoudj, Daimiel and Ichkeul were of particular importance in judging the application of Ramsar Convention.

The delegation of China communicated the greetings of the Minister of Urban and Rural Construction and Environment, and its desire to learn from the experience of others in wetland conservation. The delegation stated that by the end of October 1983, the Chinese Government had established 134 nature reserves covering an area of 156,000 sq. km (1.23% of China's territory), including 24 wetlands important as waterfowl habitats. Much work remained to be done, mainly in halting large-scale reclamation and pollution: forest removal and consequent erosion had caused several wetlands to dry out completely. China's Second Conference on Environmental Protection in January 1984 had set three main goals for future conservation action: economic construction together with protection of the environment; the

rational utilization of natural resources; and the strengthening of the scientific support for conservation. All organizations concerned with the environment in China would pursue these three aims as a matter of priority in their current programmes.

The delegation of Pakistan expressed pleasure at the two-way traffic of information made possible by the Conference and drew the meeting's attention to the special importance and vulnerability to change of wetlands in arid and semi-arid regions of the world. Emphasis placed so far on wetlands of the Western Palearctic region had tended to distract attention from arid zone wetlands. He suggested that the Soviet Union and the USA might consider giving assistance to governments in arid and semi-arid regions which faced intractable wetland conservation problems yet had few resources. He pointed out that the USA already had substantial technical cooperation experience in many arid zone countries and that the USSR shared many migratory bird populations in common with arid parts of the subcontinent.

Returning to the theme of ecological change in designated wetlands, the delegation of Austria spoke of harmonizing economic and conservation needs. In the Rheindelta Bodensee, fields important for waterfowl breeding had been illegally fertilized but the effect had been insignificant; no permanent damage had ensued. He added that World Wildlife Fund - Austria was reluctant to continue renting the Lange Lacke wetland after 1985. The conservation status of the site would not change whatever happened, as part of the Lange Lacke already had nature reserve status and the rest was a protected landscape. The Burgenland authorities had guaranteed legal and financial support in the future. The delegation reported that no detailed results had as yet emerged from studies in the area which could be affected by construction of a hydroelectric dam and power station on the Lower Danube at Hainburg. The Lower Austrian provincial government and the Federal Government would both consider the findings and make a decision; either might reject the plans or subject their acceptance to specific conditions. The construction of the hydroelectric power station would solve the problem of the tendency of the Lower Danube site to dry out; it might however also affect the riverine forest. In the absence of expert data, the Austrian government was unwilling to rely on opinions and guesses. In all the cases described, the delegation stated, there had been no changes in the ecological status of listed Austrian wetlands.

The observer of World Wildlife Fund International welcomed the Austrian delegation's assurances of the Government's concern for wetland conservation but expressed misgivings over the delegation's confidence in the ability of the Government to protect sites such as the Lange Lacke and Lower Danube from grave danger of destructive modification. The observer also referred to previous discussion of wetland conservation in Africa, where many of the most valuable and vulnerable of the world's wetlands were to be found. Most of the states concerned were not Ramsar Convention Parties and were under increasing pressure to develop wetland sites for agricultural production. The observer shared the concern of delegates at the Conference to see more countries from West and Central Africa accede to the Convention.

The delegation of Pakistan suggested that there was a need for an integrated approach to the conservation of all wetlands in arid and semi-arid regions.

The delegation of South Africa, referring to paragraph 72 and 91 of Doc. C2.6 and to the draft Directory (Doc. Inf. C2.4), informed the meeting that the wetland site in the De Hoop Natural Reserve was, contrary to the impression given in the Directory, now not only being

actively conserved but also extended.

The delegation of the Soviet Union reported on the situation in USSR where detailed arrangements existed for protection and management of nature reserves, many of them in wetlands. In addition to the 12 wetlands listed under Ramsar, 16 additional wetlands covering nearly three million hectares answered the Ramsar criteria and all were protected in state zapovedniks and zakazniks. The diversity of the conservation situation from one country to another required differing arrangements.

The delegation of Portugal, referring to paragraph 89 of Doc. C2.6, announced that the Portuguese Government had recently approved a decree-law empowering it to acquire some 5000 hectares of the rio Formosa site at Faro. This would allow management of the whole of the Qunito do Ludo site, threatened by urban development and fish farming. These developments, the delegation hoped, indicated a new direction on the Portuguese Government's part in favour of conservation of wetlands. The Tejo site had, the delegation added, now been cleared of invading water hyacinth, *Eichhornia crassipes* weeds which had formerly posed a serious problem there.

The observer from Malawi referred to earlier calls for greater participation in the Convention from among African states. He informed the Conference that Malawi was a member of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), an intergovernmental forum including representatives of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Malawi also had a mandate to coordinate wildlife conservation matters in the region. At a recent meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the SADCC member States had resolved that wetland conservation in the region needed immediate attention, and had declared that a wetland management training seminar ought to be convened in Tanzania in July/August 1986. The observer then called for help from the Secretariat and all concerned bodies. If the activities of SADCC were taken into consideration, the picture of wetland conservation in southern Africa would look considerably more encouraging than the map of Convention coverage might suggest.

The Chairman commented that collaboration with SADCC on its wetland conservation programme should be encouraged.

#### General Framework of National Policy on Wetlands

The Assistant Secretary-General pointed out that the general obligation accepted under the Convention was to make wise use of wetlands, which implied establishment of national wetland policies. He indicated that the national reports bore out the contention of Minister Braks that less attention had been given under the Convention to national policies than to listed sites. He drew attention to general statements in national reports received after the compilation of Document C2.6. The Canadian report indicated particular concern for wetlands in its temperate regions which had suffered considerable change. The Chilean report mentioned a plan to create a new system of national parks which would give greatly extended protection to wetlands. The report of the Federal Republic of Germany stated that the general problem of disturbance of wetlands by hunting activities was being studied in various listed sites. Plans for dike building in the Lower Saxony site of Leybucht also gave cause for concern, the more so as it had been reported at Cagliari that such plans had been set aside. In Iceland, the national report showed that lowland mires and lakes were being affected adversely by state-supported drainage schemes, while highland sites were under pressure

from hydroelectric development. The report from Italy indicated that large reclamation projects had ceased in the 1970s, but the problems of pollution and excessive hunting remained. The report from Portugal referred to insufficient enforcement of hunting legislation as regards protected areas and species, because of shortage of trained staff. Spain's report stressed the increase of public interest in wetland conservation in the country as a whole. The report of the USSR bore witness to an impressive range of studies to identify and describe 300 sites of international or national importance beyond the 16 sites earlier referred to by the delegation of the Soviet Union.

The Chairman emphasized the importance of elaboration of policy alongside site listing. At present, balance between these complementary means to wetland conservation was, he said, lacking.

The Chairman invited Dr. Luc Hoffmann, as an observer on behalf of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), to describe the Fund's role in supporting the Convention. WWF had, the observer said, cooperated with IWRB, IUCN, and the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) in wetland conservation activities and in supporting the Convention. Financial support for the Convention had been given through financial contributions to IUCN and IWRB. The Fund would consider supporting the Convention in the immediate future, in the expectation that this would be a transitional arrangement until a long-term solution was agreed by the Parties. The observer stressed that it was obviously inappropriate for an organization such as WWF to continue to pay Secretariat costs for an intergovernmental convention and expressed his concern that the meeting should arrive at a consensus on a technically efficient way of maintaining both the secretariat function provided by IUCN and the scientific and technical support that was at present so well provided by IWRB. The observer recalled WWF's historic interest in wetland sites such as Lange Lacke and Coto Doñana, and its important role in establishing the National Nature Reserve in the Camargue, which was likely to be the first wetland listed by France when it ratified the Convention. WWF had funded wetland projects in Sahelian sites, notably in the Inner Niger Delta in Mali, and the Banc d'Arguin, in Mauritania. IWRB, IUCN and ICBP had cooperated with WWF in preparing a Migratory Bird Programme which would provide 3/4 million dollars; much of this would be devoted to wetland projects including Neotropical, Afrotropical and Indomalayan directories of wetlands. The observer also described the involvement of WWF in events surrounding the proposal to construct a dam at Hainburg on the Danube. The Fund had coordinated a campaign to oppose the dam and hoped to influence the Austrian Government to amend internal legislation so that problems at Lange Lacke could be solved. He drew the meeting's attention to the information document Inf. C2.10 which represented the first draft of the IUCN/WWF Wetlands Campaign programme document. This major new fund raising campaign would begin in 1985 and last for about one year. He expressed the hope that it would result in substantial funding being made available for activities directly related to the work of the Ramsar Convention. In addition, he indicated that WWF's intention was to orient the campaign towards wetland conservation in development agencies affecting such wetlands. In closing his remarks, the representative of WWF expressed satisfaction at the close association of his organization with the Convention.

The Chairman thanked the observer of WWF and adjourned the meeting at 12h35.

## SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Fourth Session: 8 May 1984: 14h00 - 17h25

Chairman: Prof. D.J. Kuenen

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. M.Y. Alaoui, Dr. R.P. Schlatter

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference), Mr. M. Smart (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference), Dr. F. Burhenne-Guilmin (Legal Liaison Officer of the Conference)

Rapporteur: Mr. R. Lamb, Mr. J. Harrison

Agenda Item 9: Overview Presentation and Discussion of National Reports and Information from Observers on the Implementation of the Convention (continued)

The Secretary-General drew the attention of the Conference to Inf. C2.6, a brief document available in English, French and Spanish describing the Convention and its aims. The intention of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference was to prepare a brochure describing the Convention, including coverage of the Conference.

The delegation of Algeria regretted that the Algerian report had not yet been received by the Secretariat and presented them with his own copy. He went on to stress the importance that Algeria attached to the Convention, even though the country had already had a wetland protection programme prior to ratification. Algeria was developing a network of national parks and nature reserves to cover all different types of ecosystem in the country. There were currently four national parks. It was hoped to designate two further wetlands, Mekhada and Macta (each of 10,000 hectares), for the List. There was also a new environmental protection act that was adopted in 1983. The situation concerning wetlands was therefore reassuring, but it should be noted that financial and technical aid were required, and that training in wetland management was also a serious need.

The observer from Indonesia noted that Indonesia was not a Party to the Convention, but pointed out that large areas of the country were protected, and many of these areas were wetlands (or contained wetlands). He noted however that wetland conservation interests clashed with development interests: logging, fishing and agriculture all affected the wetland situation. He noted that some 30 million hectares of wetland were to be found on Sumatra, about the same in Irian Jaya, and some 12 million hectares in Kalimantan. These wetland sites contained several hundred species of wetland birds.

The ICBP observer enquired about the intention of the Government of the Netherlands concerning the Markermeer. He asked whether inventories of wetlands within the Netherlands included this site, and how it was rated in relation to other Dutch wetland sites. He stressed the great significance attached to this area by the last world conference of the ICBP and recalled the comments of Governor Vonhoff. In reply the delegation of the Netherlands reported that in 1980 the Government had declared an intention to reclaim 41,000 hectares, i.e. two thirds of the area. This intention had since been discussed widely with all interested parties, and a decision was expected before the end of the year. The Netherlands Government continued to discuss the policy with the advisory committees and regional authorities. There was a long tradition of nature conservation in the Netherlands at both State and private level, and many areas had been protected. Because of tension between the many interests in land-use, an elaborate system of physical planning existed and the

natural values of areas had an important affect on planning decisions.

The observer from ICBP congratulated the Government of the United Kingdom on its intention to list 132 wetlands of international importance under the Convention by 1986. He wished to know whether it was possible to name these sites, and in particular to inform the Conference which were the ten sites for which notification was imminent. In reply the delegation of the United Kingdom confirmed that such lists were already available to the Secretariat.

The Assistant Secretary-General then continued the overview of national reports, with references to the continental wetland directories in preparation, which would serve as 'shadow lists', as recommended by the Cagliari Conference.

The delegation of Finland informed the Conference that for the purposes of developing inventories of sites in Finland, wetlands had been divided into peatlands, eutrophic lakes and sea bays. Inventories of the peatlands had been made by 1979, and the Council of Ministers had decided on a peatlands conservation programme. Inventories of eutrophic lakes and sea bays were completed in 1981, and by 1982 a decision had been made in principle concerning these areas. Some 600 peatland sites were listed, and 300 sea bays and eutrophic lakes.

The delegation of Australia told the Conference of a major study carried out in Australia under the title "Water 2000". This study had unfortunately highlighted the inadequacies of previous inventories of wetland sites in the southeast of the country, an area which was thought to be well known.

The delegation of Italy informed the Conference that the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry had published a complete list of wetlands in central Italy and Sardinia.

The discussion continued on the conservation of wetlands not designated under the Convention.

The delegation of Iceland informed the Conference that although the Thjorsarver area in central Iceland was protected as a reserve the area was under threat. Decisions were awaited on two projects, the first one proposed the diversion of the river to a neighbouring watershed, and the other to create a reservoir downstream.

Turning to more generalized problems, the delegation of Sweden noted the serious problems caused by acid rain, with 20,000 lakes seriously affected. To counteract this threat £7 million were being spent in the current year and £9 million in the following year on liming measures. Sweden was anxious to encourage the reduction of pollution, but noted the international nature of this particular problem. Unless international agreement on emissions was reached, much of the work of the Convention would be wasted.

In discussion of training programmes the delegation from Senegal asked whether arrangements had been finalized for the course which IWRB was setting up with the Government of Tunisia. In reply IWRB informed the Conference that the proposals were being followed up, and that funds had now been found. It only remained to clarify relatively minor points. The Tunisian Government had indicated its support for this type of training seminar. It was hoped that courses would later be held elsewhere, and the interest of Malawi had already been noted.



The observer of Chad noted that in cooperative projects on wetland management between the developed and developing worlds, it was necessary to emphasize the importance of training. Training programmes had traditionally put emphasis on large mammals, but the bird component was equally important and IWRB's help was needed in this respect.

The delegate of Tunisia noted that the need for training in wetlands management was not a new problem, and had been discussed before. A training programme in Tunisia with the assistance of IWRB was held up by lack of funds, though this obstacle would now appear to have been resolved. However it was important to stress this problem of funding. The additional point was raised that it was essential to have a high component of practical training in such a programme (which unfortunately restricted the number of participants).

### General Comments on the Convention and its Implementation

The Assistant Secretary-General summarized general comments from national reports not covered in Document C2.6; several Parties had indicated the value of the Convention in creating public awareness of wetlands, and in giving listed wetlands international rather than national status.

He then went on to summarize instances from these reports where the Convention had facilitated wetland conservation. The Federal Republic of Germany had reported a spectacular effect at the listed site of the Rhein between Eltville and Bingen, where approved plans for a road bridge spanning the site had been cancelled. The Italian delegate referred to a recent important decision to conserve habitat at the Stagno di Molentargius. The Pakistan report indicated that listing of Lake Haleji had been a major factor in its conservation.

In discussion of the content and utilization of the Cagliari criteria, the Assistant Secretary-General referred to the report from Chile, which indicated that adaptations were required for South American countries. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany noted that, as stated by the Netherlands and Spain in their reports, the criteria needed adaptation to cover species other than birds. The thrust of the Convention should be towards wetlands and not birds. At present the best available knowledge concerned birds, hence the value of the criteria; as knowledge developed in other fields, however, there was a need to widen the criteria to cover other wetland features, in particular plant associations.

The final matter discussed was the involvement of developing countries in the Convention. The delegation of Norway recalled Recommendation 1.2 of the Cagliari Conference, and expressed pleasure at seeing so many delegates and observers from developing countries at this Convention. He noted that at the Cagliari Conference delegates had gone some way towards a new way of thinking about wetlands and wetland management, and with the launch of the World Conservation Strategy there was a greater realisation of the important links between conservation and development. National conservation strategies should of course include wetlands. More and more of the industrial nations were including environmental components within their aid programmes. Funds were available, but there was a need for specific requests. In Norway about £1,000,000 was available for environmental support, but there had been few requests from less developed countries for funding from this source. The developing nations needed to be made aware of such possibilities, and to make specific requests for support.

The delegation of the United Kingdom added that it was up to the developing countries to define their priorities for funding, and then to approach the developed countries for assistance. He drew the attention of delegates to paragraph 141 in the distributed version of the overview.

The delegation of the Netherlands stated that the Ministry for Development Aid now had an advisory Committee on Ecology and Development Aid. A focal point in the department for development aid had been established with the primary task of assessing the environmental component of bilateral development projects. A small fund had been established and applications were awaited. The delegation also noted that there was now a project of the Environment Committee of OECD and the Development Assistance Committee of that same organization on environmental impact assessment of development projects. He also referred to UNEP's new Clearing House Fund for environmental projects.

The delegation of Chile thanked the Norwegian and Dutch delegations for their encouraging interventions and stressed that help must be interdisciplinary. The delegation of Senegal noted that developing countries had many priorities for funding such as a need for hospitals. It was generally believed by recipients of aid that funds used for conservation would be taken from aid which would otherwise have gone to these high priority areas. It had to be made clear that funds were available strictly for conservation purposes.

The observer of EEB asked how far Contracting Parties had really adopted far-sighted policies. In reply the Assistant Secretary-General recalled his earlier remarks on the variety of approaches adopted, all of which were compatible with the Convention. The biggest subject for concern would be listed sites which, though not deleted, deteriorated in value. The Secretary-General noted in response to the EEB question that there were problems and difficulties, which could however be solved if there was an opportunity to discuss them. Many concrete examples had in the present discussion been the result of the Convention's influence.

The representative from Ducks Unlimited looked forward to assisting the United States observers in acceding to the Convention, noting that this organization approached the problems of wetland protection from the private point of view -- not necessarily as land owners but also as land and water controllers. The private sector had a responsibility to make a contribution.

The Assistant Secretary-General concluded the presentation by informing the Conference that the secretariat would endeavour to bring the overview document (Doc. C2.6) up to date. He also encouraged Contracting Parties to submit reports by the appointed time for any future conferences. In this regard the Secretary-General again reminded the Conference that the delegation of the United Kingdom had prepared a draft recommendation concerning the Preparation of national reports.

The Chairman closed discussion on this agenda item.

#### Agenda Item 10: Discussion on Proposed Amendments to the Convention

The delegation of the Netherlands made an introductory statement, in which it recalled that the Cagliari Conference had recommended that a set of amendments be prepared with a view to improving the effectiveness of the Convention. Cagliari Recommendation 1.8 identified

nine points to be included in such amendments; IUCN, in the exercise of its Bureau functions under the Convention, had undertaken in consultation with the Government of the Netherlands to prepare draft amendments relating to these points. The Dutch delegation emphasized the particular importance it attached to the amendments pertaining to the introduction of a financial mechanism and the establishment of a permanent secretariat, as well as regular meetings of Contracting Parties. It is noted that these amendments could not be adopted until such time as the Paris Protocol came into force and therefore urged Parties to speed up the process of ratification. The Netherlands delegation further expressed the hope that fruitful discussions of these proposed amendments, now officially submitted to the Conference by the Government of the Netherlands, would take place at the present Conference and considered that such exchange of views would be invaluable in the further elaboration of the proposals. Finally, the delegation requested the secretariat to present the proposals in more detail.

The Legal Liaison Officer introduced each proposed amendment in relation to the corresponding part of Cagliari Recommendation 1.8:

#### 1. Regular and extraordinary meetings of the Parties (proposed article 6.1)

It was pointed out that precedents for the clause as proposed were numerous. Virtually all international conventions provided for a mechanism by which Parties met regularly to review the progress achieved under the Convention. Virtually all conventions also provide for the possibility to convene extraordinary meetings of the Parties, where a certain number of them, usually one-third, considered that consultations on a particular point could not wait until the next regular meeting was convened.

The functions of the Conference of the Parties as proposed in Article 7 were a reflection of those already assigned to the Conference in the text of the Convention as it stood. Two additional functions had been added, as called for by point 5 of Rec. 1.8, specifically enabling the Conference (1) to adopt criteria, procedures and standards, and (2) to decide on any additional measures that should be taken to implement the objectives of the Convention.

#### 2. Adoption of rules of procedure by the Conference of the Parties, and attendance of observers at such Conference, especially from non-governmental organizations (Articles 6.2 and 6.3(b))

It was recalled that with regard to the adoption of the rules of procedure, various models were available. The proposal was based on the CITES model, the text of which provided that each Conference of the Parties might determine and adopt rules of procedure for the meeting.

The proposal relating to the attendance of observers at meetings of the Conference was based on the corresponding provisions of the Bonn Convention, as requested by Rec. 1.8. It had other precedents, most notably CITES and the Berne Convention. In each of these cases, provisions related to attendance of observers, and, in particular of non-governmental organizations, were incorporated in the text of the Convention itself.

#### 3. Authority of the Conference of the Parties to adopt financial provisions to provide resources for the organization of meetings, the operation of the Secretariat, or for any other purposes (Proposed Article 6.5).

It was noted that this proposal was based on the corresponding provision of the Bonn Convention. It however went slightly further than the Bonn Convention in that it recognized *expressis verbis* that contributions from other sources might be received. It was recalled that the provisions of the Bonn Convention in this regard were themselves based on the experience gained in CITES, which had also had to be amended in order to provide a basis upon which the Parties decide on financial matters.

It was further noted that the proposal foresaw the unanimity rule for all questions related to the finances of the Convention, and that a distinction was made between the approval of the budget and the scale of contributions.

4. Annex to the Convention containing the criteria for selection of wetlands of international importance, procedure to amend such an Annex (proposed new article).

It was pointed out that it was now normal practice in conservation conventions to have appendices containing either species lists, or containing criteria, standards, procedures and guidelines which the Parties decided to adopt and give formal recognition to.

There were matters which the Parties might wish to revise with a view to keeping up technical progress or improved scientific knowledge. To include that type of material in an Annex to a convention gave it an official and formal character. It also allowed for an amendment mechanism less cumbersome than the one which must be used to amend the other parts of the convention. It was indicated that the proposed amendment was based on the provisions of the Bonn Convention relating to appendices; there were many other precedents.

It was felt that the Conference of the Parties might at a later stage wish to adopt and include further criteria, standards and procedures in this Annex. Hence, the text as proposed provided for one Annex which might however be constituted by various elements; in addition, its enabling clause was not limited to criteria for the selection of wetlands.

5. Authority for the Contracting Parties to create subsidiary bodies, in particular a scientific committee (Proposed Article 6.4)

This proposal provided that the Conference of the Parties should establish a scientific committee and might establish other subsidiary bodies.

The mandatory establishment of the scientific committee might be considered as beyond the mandate of Recommendation 1.8; it was felt that amongst subsidiary bodies the scientific committee was to be singled out, as scientific aspects played a vital role in the dynamics of the implementation of the Convention. It might be noted that the modalities of its composition and constitution had not been specified, leaving great flexibility to the Parties.

6. Establishment of a permanent secretariat

Various formulae were envisaged to achieve this aim in Cagliari and directly thereafter.

Discussions at Cagliari had led to the following basic points:

- there was a need for a small permanent entity to serve the Parties in the fulfillment of the objectives of the Convention,

- this entity, from a legal point of view, should not, and in fact could not, be an existing organization as such, if only because such a solution might result in conflicts between the aims of the organization in question, and the will of the sovereign Parties; a permanent secretariat could only be an entity of which the Parties are the master;

- however, such an entity would greatly benefit from a close association with existing international bodies with expertise in the field, most notably, IUCN and IWRB.

The proposed draft attempted to satisfy these requirements in the following way:

- a secretariat should be created;

- this secretariat should be "provided" by IUCN, this formula was that used in both CITES and the Bonn Convention with regard to UNEP. This indicated that IUCN, as an organization, would be responsible for the administration of this entity, thereby ensuring continuity with the present arrangements under the Convention;

- this unit would, however, be distinct from IUCN, thereby reflecting the fact that it served a separate body of sovereign states;

- finally, this unit would use to the maximum extent possible the expertise of IUCN and IWRB as organizations in the field of wetlands, and which both organizations had indicated they were willing to contribute, according to modalities to be mutually agreed upon, and at a level to be determined by the Parties.

7. This secretariat would have a number of functions additional to those already mentioned in the Convention: this was called for by point 7 (a to e) of Recommendation 1.8. Similar provisions existed in other international conventions.

All other functions assigned to the Bureau in the present text of the Convention had been retained: finally, a few important, but noncontroversial functions, not mentioned by Recommendation 1.8, had been added, such as the provision of public information concerning the Convention and its objectives.

8. Final clauses: Stricter domestic measures and settlement of disputes (proposed new articles)

Two remarks were made on the first point: firstly that this type of clause was common in international agreements: secondly, that the liberty had been taken to add also its usual counterpart, that is, a clause to the effect that the provisions of the Convention did not affect rights and obligations deriving from other conventions.

On the second point, it was noted that the choice of an arbitration clause was far from being unusual: the precise formula chosen represented the present policy of the Government of the Netherlands.

These proposed new articles were designed to give effect to points 8 and 9 of Rec. 1.8.

In reply to a question of the delegate of Norway, the Legal Liaison Officer confirmed that the

term Bureau had to be retained in order to avoid amending other articles in the Convention and the Protocol.

The Swedish delegation wondered, in relation to the proposed Article 8.4, how an autonomous unit provided by IUCN could enjoy legal capacity; the Legal Liaison Officer replied that IUCN as an organization could not as such become the secretariat of an international convention: on the other hand, IUCN could be responsible for the administration of a separate entity specifically entrusted with these secretariat functions, as UNEP was for CITES or the Bonn Convention. Whether such an entity should enjoy legal personality separate from that of the administrative body was a matter of legal opinion.

The Swedish delegation, referring to Art. 8.2, asked whether the Conference of the Parties could decide on the tasks of the IUCN Secretariat. He thought that such a decision should be taken by the IUCN General Assembly. The Secretary General recalled that the matter had been debated by the IUCN Council in November 1983 and that it had welcomed a role such as that envisaged by the proposed amendments with regard to international conservation conventions.

The delegation of the United Kingdom considered that the question of the previous speaker required further consideration and indicated that in his opinion an appropriate solution was to be found in Article IX 2 and 3 of the Bonn Convention. These provisions provided that "the Secretariat is provided by the Executive Director of UNEP. To the extent and in the manner he considers appropriate, he may be assisted by suitable intergovernmental or non-governmental, international or national agencies and bodies technically qualified in protection, conservation and management of wild animals", and that "If the United Nations Environment Programme is no longer able to provide the Secretariat, the Conference of the Parties shall make alternative arrangements for the secretariat".

The delegation of Switzerland requested clarification of the mentioning in Article 6.2(b) of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It was stated in reply that the International Atomic Energy Agency was not a specialized agency of the United Nations and had therefore to be specifically mentioned.

With regard to proposed article 6.3(b) the delegate of Switzerland asked whether it would not be preferable to adopt a single set of rules of procedure that would be valid for all meetings of the Conference. It was pointed out in reply that the proposed wording was only one of several possibilities chosen in the absence of precise guidance in Rec. 1.8.

The delegate of Denmark asked whether the proposed formula in Article 8.2 was not to be seen as the continuation of an already existing situation (present Article 8.1). In her reply the Legal Liaison Officer indicated that the new provisions would ensure continuity in the provision of services by IUCN. On the other hand, there were differences between the present formula, requesting IUCN as an organization to perform bureau functions, and the proposed one, under which IUCN would serve as an administrative infrastructure for an autonomous entity funded by the Parties.

The delegation of Australia expressed its appreciation for the efforts accomplished in preparing proposals to amend the Convention. The success of the Convention, as shown by the Assistant Secretary General's review of its implementation, was ample proof of its satisfactory operation. Although not opposed to amendments, the delegation felt, however,

that caution was required as other ways could be found to achieve the same results. If the Convention was to be amended, the Australian states would have to be consulted as if a new treaty had been concluded. There was, therefore, a risk that there would be a two-tiered convention if certain Parties decided not to accept the proposed amendments.

There were four points which were of particular concern to the Australian delegation:

1. Is an autonomous Bureau necessary?
2. Is it the most efficient tool?
3. Could not the responsibility for these tasks be vested with IUCN as provided for by Article 8.1 of the present text; if the administrative capacity of IUCN was strained, could not the matter be then reconsidered?
4. Will the existence of financial obligations deter States from acceding to the Convention?

Summarizing its statement, the delegation of Australia expressed the view that there could be other ways to achieve the same results, that if IUCN in cooperation with IWRB were not able to perform these services, there could be other bodies available to do so and that in view of the present shortage of funds, financial transfers from conservation projects could be detrimental to the implementation of the Convention and would deter States from acceding. The delegation of Australia furthermore indicated its awareness that other delegations were of this opinion.

In absence of any further statement, the Chairman adjourned the session at 15h25.

## SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Fifth Session: 9 May 1984: 09h00 - 09h30

Chairman: Prof. D.J. Kuenen

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. M.Y. Alaoui, Dr. R.P. Schlatter

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference), Mr. M. Smart (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference)

Rapporteur: Mr. R. Lamb

The Chairman opened the session by calling upon the Secretary-General, who announced that the delegation of Italy had provided the final manuscript of the Proceedings of the Cagliari Conference.

### Agenda Item 11: Framework for Implementing the Convention

The Secretary-General introduced Doc. C2.4 which would form the basis for discussions to take place in the sessions of Working Groups A and B. These would examine, respectively, research and monitoring requirements and land use and management requirements for wetland conservation. Much had been done already by the Parties, he stressed, to implement

the Convention; but the Preparatory Committee of the Conference had felt that it would be useful to provide practical guidance as to how the Convention's aims might be realized. The framework was designed to be a non-binding text to help Parties choose between a range of possible implementation options. With this use in mind, the framework had been developed with the assistance of the authors of Docs. C2.7 - 10. The Secretary-General explained that the framework had drawn upon the provisions of the Convention itself or the Recommendations of the Cagliari Conference. The Secretary-General suggested that the Working Groups might review each item in the framework and then proceed to discuss Action Points of priority for attention in the period between the second and third ordinary Conferences of the Contracting Parties. He concluded that the Conference should be encouraged by indications provided at the previous session by several delegations and observers that funding for priority conservation action might be available.

The observer from IUCN was invited by the Chairman to describe the Wetland Conservation Programme of IUCN (Inf. C2.10). In doing so, the observer from IUCN announced that there would be a meeting after the Conference to gather critical comments on the programme.

The Assistant Secretary-General requested that comments on the Summary Report of the previous plenary sessions be promptly submitted to the secretariat so that these might be included in the Final Report.

The Chairman invited the delegation of Bulgaria to provide information on the wetland situation in their country. That delegation spoke of its Government's policy for wetland conservation, approved on 8 August 1975. Two areas in Bulgaria were now listed pursuant to the Ramsar Convention as wetlands of international importance and it was intended to designate two others (Atanasovsko Lake and Durankulak) shortly. Bulgaria had, the delegation reported, 94 nature reserves at present, covering 45,000 hectares or 0.3% of the country's area. The country was rich in higher animal species and nearly 75% of these were protected by law. The delegation announced that an international Symposium on the theme of "The role of wetlands for the preservation of genetic diversity" would be organized in Srebarna between 8-12 October 1984 by the Bulgarian National Committee on the Man and Biosphere Programme. Delegates to the present Conference were, the delegation said, warmly invited to attend this event.

The Chairman announced that the Credentials Committee was continuing its consideration of the credentials and that a final report would be submitted in the coming days.

The Chairman closed the session at 09h30.

## SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Sixth Session: 10 May 1984: 14h15 - 17h00

Chairman: Prof. D.J. Kuenen

Vice-Chairmen: Dr. R.P. Schlatter

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference), Mr. M. Smart (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference)



Rapporteur: Mr. R. Lamb

The Chairman opened the session and called upon the representative of the Depositary to report on the progress accomplished towards finalization of the Convention text in Arabic and Spanish and the Protocol text in German. The representative of the Depositary announced that the Arabic version of the Convention had been corrected and accepted by the delegations concerned. The Spanish version had been perfected and a list of corrections would be prepared. There remained a problem with the German version which concerned only two or three words. As it had not been possible to reach agreement, the Depositary would pursue the matter by correspondence with the Contracting Parties concerned. The small changes which remained to be effected would not interfere with the ratification process under way.

The Chairman asked the Conference to resume discussion arising from the deliberations of Working Group C dealing with proposed amendments to the Convention, then to discuss the findings of Working Groups A and B and possible courses of action arising from them.

Agenda Item 10: Discussion on Proposed Amendments to the Convention (continued)

The USA observer asked for clarification regarding IWRB's potential role, in particular its plans to broaden the range of its technical advice.

The observer from IWRB recalled with gratitude the many compliments the present conference had paid to the work of his Bureau. Everyone agreed that the main aim must be to achieve the best possible conservation of wetlands throughout the world. The urgency was great, and he reminded the Conference of the loss, reported by the observer from Malawi, of five of the eleven important wetlands in that country since 1979. Therefore he stressed that we must for the moment make the best use we can of existing bodies. He repeated his opening statement that he was authorized to broaden IWRB's remit, and to discuss constitutional changes, if IWRB's usefulness and services to wetland conservation could thereby be improved. He stressed that IUCN and IWRB were collaborative not competing organizations: given the tools they could do the job.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany, referring to draft Article 6.5, was of the view that a majority of two-thirds for approving amendments was insufficient; his government preferred unanimity but he admitted that this might cause practical problems; in any case a strong majority was needed.

The delegation of Greece suggested replacing the words "to decide" by the words "to make recommendations" in draft Article 7(h). He questioned (in relation to 7(f) whether the Conference of the Parties should be empowered to adopt criteria. The Assistant Secretary-General explained that the Article referred to establishment of international standards, for which the Conference of the Parties appeared more appropriate than individual Parties.

The Chairman commented that there could be differences between national criteria and criteria adopted under the Convention. When the wetland was listed under the Convention, Ramsar criteria should prevail. Stricter criteria could of course continue to apply at national level.

The delegation of New Zealand accepted the principles of draft Article 8.5 but called for greater emphasis on the provisions for training in 8.5(k) since this was one of the most

fruitful fields for action under the Convention.

The observer from Egypt, commenting on the provision in the second new Article on settlement of disputes between states sharing wetlands, suggested reference to the good offices of competent international organizations as a way of resolving disputes without resorting to arbitration.

#### Agenda Item 12: Adoption of Framework Document and Action Points

Discussion turned to the summary reports of Working Groups A and B (WG C2.1 and 2) (see page 45 to 49) and to the Framework for implementation of the Convention (Doc. C2.4) which had formed the basis for the Groups' debate. The Secretary-General explained that the Preparatory Committee had prepared the Framework document to act as a series of reference points, designed to assist Contracting Parties in their implementation of the Convention, given the lack of formal guidance in the text. A more detailed document was not feasible but the Framework had provided a basis for discussion at Groningen and could stimulate ideas on priorities for action in the period between Conferences. The wide-ranging discussions of the Working Groups had added several major new ideas on wetland conservation action.

The Chairman invited comments on the reports of the Working Groups. The Assistant Secretary-General suggested that the Framework would prove useful as a guide on practical conservation measures. It would be regrettable if the only outcome of the Conference's deliberations was a series of administrative measures with no recommendations on conservation-oriented action.

The delegation of Senegal stated that the report of Working Group B did not reflect his proposal to establish an aid fund for wetland conservation in developing countries.

The Chairman invited the World Wildlife Fund International observer to expand on the opportunities for support for wetland conservation in developing countries which might arise from the forthcoming Wetland Campaign of the Fund. The observer stated that the Campaign and its related programme would aim to encourage those responsible for granting international aid to channel assistance to wetland conservation. The Fund was unlikely to make ad hoc contributions to projects not included in the programme. It was hard to see how the aid fund envisaged by the delegation of Senegal might operate. The World Heritage Fund, from which the Djoudj site might derive assistance, was the only comparable fund of which he was aware.

The delegation of the United Kingdom suggested that Action Point Six of the summary report of Working Group B represented the most that could realistically be said at present to meet the wishes of the delegation of Senegal.

The observer from Egypt referred to discussion in Working Group B on responsibility for pollution and recalled Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration which called on governments to avoid damage caused by pollution. The observer from EEB was concerned that the summary report made no reference to discussion which had taken place on shadow lists, in which his organization was most interested.

The Secretary-General remarked that the reports were not comprehensive but selected from among the many points put to the Working Groups, those most appropriate for action. He

added that the Secretariat would produce an amended version of the Framework for Implementing the Convention, incorporating the Working Group participants' textual criticisms and amendments before the end of the Conference.

The Assistant Secretary-General said he thought the two reports showed some significant common ground, particularly where standardization of the classification and inventory were concerned.

The Chairman indicated that discussion of this item could be concluded at this point, and a decision on the Framework document could be made at the final plenary session.

#### Agenda Item 10: Discussion on Proposed Amendments to the Convention (continued)

The Netherlands delegation circulated the English draft of the suggested terms of reference for a proposed Task Force to work further on developing amendments to the Convention. Various amendments to the terms of reference were suggested and incorporated in the revised terms of reference annexed to the present report. Several delegations expressed the wish that the report of the Task Force should be available before the next Conference so that its conclusions could be reflected in amendments adopted at a diplomatic conference.

The Chairman once more urged Parties which were not yet Parties to the Protocol to take appropriate action rapidly, in order that amendments arising from the Task Force's deliberations could be adopted as soon as possible.

The delegation of the Netherlands accepted that the Task Force should consider the scale of contributions to be made by Parties. The Chairman, at the delegation's request, made proposals on composition of the Task Force. He suggested that the Task Force be made up of representatives of Canada, the Netherlands, Tunisia, Poland and of the Nordic Parties. He called a short adjournment to allow all the delegates to consider their position.

After an adjournment of 15 minutes, the meeting reconvened at 16h30. The delegation of Denmark stated that the Nordic Parties had agreed that a delegate from Denmark might represent them as a member of the Task Force, but that a delegate from Sweden could attend in its place if the Danish representative was unable to be present at Task Force meetings. The delegation of Mauritania, with the support of the observer from Mali, suggested that Senegal be represented on the Task Force. The delegation of Senegal indicated its agreement to this nomination.

The Chairman then announced that the Task Force would be composed of representatives of Canada, the Netherlands, Tunisia, Poland, Senegal and Denmark or (as occasion demanded) Sweden, and would be serviced by IUCN and IWRB.

The delegation of the Netherlands, referring to point 4 of the proposed terms of reference of the Task Force, stressed that, once the Paris Protocol has entered into force, the next conference of Contracting Parties should be convened in conformity with Article 10 bis of the Paris Protocol in order to be able to adopt such amendments as may be agreed upon.

The Vice-Chairman announced that the delegates and observers from Spanish-speaking countries had agreed to accept a corrected version of the Unesco Spanish text of the Convention as an international reference text; local texts could continue to be used for

internal purposes.

The session was adjourned at 17h00.

## SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Seventh Session: 12 May 1984: 09h30 - 12h10

Chairman: Prof. D.J. Kuenen

Vice-Chairman: Dr. R.P. Schlatter

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference), Mr. M. Smart (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference)

Rapporteur: Mr. J. Harrison

The Chairman opened the session by calling upon the Assistant Secretary-General to address the Conference. The Assistant Secretary-General recalled that he had served in the same capacity at the first Conference of the Contracting Parties held in Cagliari in November 1980. The success of that Conference and the effective operation of the Ramsar Convention in Italy had been due to a large extent to one man, Dr. Alberto Chelini in his multifarious roles as official of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, officer of the Italian Hunting Federation and convinced promoter of nature conservation. The Assistant Secretary-General paid tribute to Dr. Chelini whose death had been announced since the Cagliari Conference. Participants stood in silence to honour his memory. The delegation of Italy thanked the Conference for its recognition of the important rôle played by Dr. Chelini.

### Agenda Item 7: Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. V. Koester, the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, presented Cred. C2.1, the Report of the Credentials Committee. He announced that since the preparation of the report further credentials had been submitted and accepted. Revisions to the report were therefore necessary and had been incorporated into document Cred. C2.1 (Rev.).

Mr. Koester emphasized the flexible and pragmatic approach adopted by the Committee. He proposed that the Committee's recommendations be transmitted to the Task Force for consideration, and drew attention to the Committee's comments on the desirability of CITES and the Ramsar Convention following the same rules and practice.

There were no comments on the report which was accepted by the Conference.

### Agenda Item 13: Adoption of the Report of the Conference

At the Chairman's invitation, the Secretary-General explained that the Report of the Conference would include the records of the seven plenary sessions, the reports of the three working groups, the texts of the Recommendations of the Conference, the Conference working papers, and the list of participants. He recalled that participants had had the opportunity to submit amendments to the drafts of the records of the first five plenary sessions and of meetings of the first two working groups. The Secretary-General requested participants to inform the Secretariat of amendments to the records of the remaining plenary sessions and working group. After some revision the Conference accepted the records of

plenary sessions one to five, and subject to written corrections submitted to the Secretariat, of session six. The Secretary-General announced that the record of the present plenary session would be circulated in due course. The Conference also accepted the reports of the three Working Groups. The Secretary-General noted that the reports of the first two Working Groups had provided the basis for a recasting and restructuring of the Framework for Implementing the Convention (Doc C2.4) which had been attached as an Annex to draft Recommendation 2.3 (Action Points for Priority Attention), submitted by the delegation of the Netherlands. In addition, the Chairman proposed that the report of the third Working Group be forwarded to the Task Force as a basis for its deliberations.

The Chairman, in introducing discussion of the nine draft Recommendations, noted that such Recommendations might represent a reminder to participants of actions which they themselves should execute, or alternatively an exhortation to action by outside bodies or agencies.

At the Chairman's invitation the delegation of the United Kingdom introduced draft Recommendation 2.1 (Submission of National Reports), noting that it was submitted in a desire to help the secretariat; the delegation further offered to prepare a draft of a simplified outline for national reports for future Conferences of the Parties. The Recommendation was adopted.

The Chairman invited the delegation of Austria to introduce draft Recommendation 2.2 (Amendment of the Convention). The Austrian delegation recalled that the debate on the proposed amendments to the Convention had shown that the matter was controversial and if amendments were adopted by only some of the Contracting Parties, a "two-tiered" Convention would result. The draft Recommendation had been submitted with the intention of allowing adoption of amendments by consensus or on the broadest possible basis. Following informal consultations, the Austrian delegation had modified its proposed draft Recommendation by deleting the words "unanimously or" in line eight. The Danish delegation indicated that it appreciated the intention of the draft Recommendation, but suggested that the formulation could be improved. Pursuant to the terms of the Paris Protocol, procedures already existed for the adoption of amendments to the Convention. Furthermore, adoption of amendments by consensus would not solve the problem of the "two-tiered" Convention, since any such amendments would require ratification by the Parties which would involve a time lag while some Parties had accepted the amendments and some had not. The Danish delegation indicated that it would submit amendments to the draft Recommendation along the following lines: "Recommends that the Contracting Parties taking part in the adoption of amendments after the entry into force of the Paris Protocol endeavour, whatever the method of adoption, to adopt these amendments by consensus".

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany noted that the proposed Recommendation could only be a statement of intent and strongly supported the position adopted by the Danish delegation. The delegation of the Netherlands fully endorsed this view. The delegation of the United Kingdom said that, if this recommendation had sought to put forward an approach to the work of this present Conference, it would have been legitimate for this Conference to have considered the modus operandi suggested. However, since it could only refer to the work of the next Conference, the UK delegation considered that it was undesirable to seek to pre-empt that Conference's freedom of manoeuvre, particularly as the present Conference did not know what recommendations would come out of the Task Force. The UK delegation accordingly considered that there was no need for the recommendation and, while not

intending to vote against the recommendation as amended by the Danish delegation, would prefer to see it dropped.

The Chairman put the proposal not to adopt the Recommendation to the vote. The Conference decided, by seven votes in favour, ten against and eight abstentions, not to abandon the Recommendation, and by consensus to adopt the Recommendation as amended by the Danish delegation.

Recommendation 2.3 was introduced, at the Chairman's request by the delegation of the Netherlands, which proposed three changes to the text submitted. In the third Action Point the word "also" should be inserted between "cover" and "ecological factors"; in the fifth Action Point the words "conservation projects and" should be inserted between "planning of" and "projects which may lead"; finally in the sixth Action Point, the words "before, during and" should be inserted between "wetland areas" and "after execution". The delegation of India proposed that the third Action Point should read "factors concerning life other than waterfowl" rather than simply "factors other than waterfowl", a proposal supported by the delegation of Switzerland.

The delegation of Finland pointed out that the text of the Recommendation did not indicate who was responsible for execution of the Action Points identified. The Australian delegation supported this contention; it was unlikely that useful progress would be made unless responsibility for a task was given. The Chairman presumed that the Recommendation was directed to IUCN, as the body responsible for performing continuing bureau functions under the Convention. The observer from IUCN drew attention to Document INF C2.10 which presented details of IUCN's wetland conservation plan, to be implemented more intensively from 1985; he felt that the Action Points of the present Recommendation and the content of the IUCN plan were in harmony. The Chairman suggested that the interim secretariat should write to IUCN indicating that the two plans were congruent. The Australian delegation supported this suggestion, but commented that action under this Recommendation need not be restricted to IUCN; any interested international body, including IWRB, UNEP and Unesco could be approached.

The delegation of Switzerland asked about the status of the Framework Document annexed to the Recommendation. The Chairman explained that the Conference took note of this document, and that comments or thoughts on it could be collected, as an ongoing exercise, by IUCN as the body responsible for continuing bureau functions.

The Conference adopted Recommendation 2.3 as amended.

At the Chairman's request, the Assistant Secretary-General read corrections to the French version of the draft of Recommendation 2.4 (Possibilities of Financial or Other Support for the Interim Secretariat). The delegation of Norway then explained that the text was a repeated call to the Contracting Parties to find financial or other means of support for an interim secretariat for the Convention. The wording had been carefully chosen and would, it was hoped, not cause problems for any Contracting Parties. The delegation of Sweden indicated that it had received strict instructions on the subject of voluntary contributions and must therefore abstain in the vote of this Recommendation. The delegation of the United Kingdom indicated that it too had clear instructions on this matter, but pointed out that the careful wording only requested the Contracting Parties to give careful consideration to possibilities of finding support. The delegation of the UK therefore found no need to abstain. It also

remarked that the word "secretariat" in the last line should not begin with a capital letter. The delegation of Tunisia suggested that the Recommendation be addressed not only to Contracting Parties, and that the words "and the international organizations concerned" be inserted between "the Contracting Parties" and "to give careful consideration". The text of the Recommendation, as revised in discussion, was adopted, with the delegation of Sweden abstaining.

The Chairman, commenting on this Recommendation, said that the extreme importance of the whole Convention for conservation was now clear. Thanks to support from IUCN, IWRB and a number of Contracting Parties, it had been possible for the Convention to operate in recent years and for the present Conference to be held. It was however obvious that money was necessary for organization of conferences and the functioning of the Convention; the funds of IUCN and IWRB, who had no formal obligation to provide finance, should not be drained and could not be expected to be continually provided. The Chairman appealed to Contracting Parties to ensure that the Recommendation was given effect.

In reference to draft Recommendation 2.5 (Designation of the Wadden Sea for the List of Wetlands of International Importance), the delegation of Denmark explained that, while the Danish part of the Wadden Sea had not been designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, the whole area was protected as a nature reserve and game reserve. In this way the obligations accepted under the joint Declaration on the Wadden Sea had been met. Furthermore the area was designated as a Special Protection Area under the European Communities Directive on Wild Birds. It would be possible for Denmark to designate the whole area including saltmarshes for the Ramsar List immediately, but the Danish Government wished also to include in the designated site a number of adjoining polders, river valleys and other wetlands, about which further negotiation was necessary. The Danish Government had announced that designation should ensue in 1985 or 1986. The Danish delegation had no objection to the draft Recommendation.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany pointed out that, as in Denmark, most of the German part of the Wadden Sea was already protected. There were difficulties in designation for the Ramsar List but it was hoped that the northern part of the Wadden Sea, excluding the navigation channels of major estuaries such as the Elbe and Weser, would eventually be listed. The delegation had no objection to this Recommendation which would help the authorities by emphasizing the importance of the Wadden Sea.

The Recommendation was adopted by the Conference.

The Assistant Secretary-General pointed out that in the draft of Recommendation 2.6 (Conservation and Management of Sahel Wetlands), the word "natural" should be substituted for "national" in the first paragraph of section 6.1. The delegation of Senegal and of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania then proposed that the effect would be greater if the three sections were split into separate Recommendations, each addressed to the appropriate organization. The references to Lake Aleg and the Lake of Mal could best be incorporated in Recommendation 2.9 (Conservation Action and Protection of Wetlands Not Designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance). The two delegations offered to consult with the Conference secretariat to incorporate this separation and other minor amendments into a final draft. On this basis the Conference adopted the Recommendation.

The Chairman then invited the delegation of Australia to introduce draft Recommendation

2.7 (Conservation of Djoudj National Bird Park, Senegal). The delegation felt that it was important to have, between Conferences of the Contracting Parties, a committee of Parties providing a continuum to which the interim secretariat could relate. Such a committee would inevitably have growing pains and should therefore be as simple as possible. The proposed Standing Committee could be composed of representatives of the Netherlands (as hosts of the present Conference), the host of the next Conference of the Parties and of one other Party. The Danish delegation supported the idea of a Standing Committee and thought that both the previous and the next hosts of Conferences should automatically be members. The delegation of Switzerland felt that in addition to these two members there should be three others, chosen in relation to geographical position. The delegation of Austria supported the Swiss view and added that the terms of reference of the committee should be roughly defined. The delegation of Pakistan indicated general support for the idea of a Standing Committee. The delegation from the United Kingdom opposed the Recommendation, whose financial obligations were totally unknown, and which gave no indication of the frequency of proposed meetings. There was potential overlap with the terms of reference of the Task Force already established. A Standing Committee established on the basis of a Recommendation not previously discussed in the Conference would detract from the urgency of the Task Force's deliberations. The delegation of Poland supported the view of the United Kingdom on the grounds that a Standing Committee would duplicate the work of the Task Force. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany feared that the draft Recommendation would lead to protracted discussion which was not at present appropriate. Establishment of a Standing Committee was premature until structures had been finalized.

The Danish delegation was of the opinion that operation of the Standing Committee would not be a charge of the Convention's budget, since each Party participating in the committee would cover its own expenses. The delegation of Switzerland understood that the aim was to establish a committee which could represent the Convention's interests until the Task Force had reported and until a definite solution was found. The Swiss delegation suggested the committee be called provisional rather than permanent, and that definite arrangements be left open. The delegation of Australia supported the intervention from Switzerland. The Committee would not be a miniature Conference of the Parties, but simply a letter-box, the members of the Committee might not even need to meet - they would simply represent Contracting Parties between one conference and the next.

The delegation of the United Kingdom said that even if Parties bore their own expenses, support services would require funding. He could not see how a mandate could be given to some Contracting Parties to represent others and agreed with the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany that the proposal was premature. The Task Force should be asked to make proposals on this subject to the next Conference of the Parties. In the meantime the Convention should soldier on, using the good offices of IUCN and IWRB though without presuming too much on them.

Summarizing the discussion of the draft Recommendation, the Chairman remarked that he had originally felt the idea to be excellent, and indispensable for the operation of the Convention. Subsequently however he had come to see the problems of finance and of overlap with the Task Force. He therefore felt that the execution of this sensible idea should be put in the hands of the Task Force to ensure continuity. He suggested that the text of the Recommendation be redrafted and discussed again after a coffee break.

After this break, the delegation of Australia put forward a modified Recommendation,



proposing an interim Standing Committee made up of at least three members of the Task Force and calling on the Task Force to prepare for the next Conference of the Parties a series of proposals on the composition and functions of a permanent Standing Committee. The Australian delegation explained that the revised text was proposed with some reluctance, since the concept, originally articulated by the observer of USA, was sound, it envisaged one rôle for the Task Force, which would seek support from IUCN, IWRB and others, and a quite separate rôle for the Standing Committee, made up exclusively of Contracting Parties. The delegation explained that in this way IUCN would not be placed in the embarrassing position of arguing for its own pecuniary requirements.

The delegation of the United Kingdom expressed appreciation for the drafting work of the Australian delegation, but nevertheless found the redrafted text unacceptable. The new draft removed the possibility that the Task Force might recommend no Standing Committee, and took a fundamental decision, with no prior notice and insufficient discussion, to set up a further Conference body. The UK Delegation strongly urged rejection of the proposal. If the Task Force recommended establishment of a Standing Committee, the United Kingdom would study the proposal. The delegations of Poland and of Italy supported the views of the UK delegation. The Danish delegation was concerned with the method of selecting members of the Standing Committee and suggested that it should be possible to include the country hosting the next conference.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany felt establishment of a Standing Committee was premature. The host of the next Conference of the Parties should be included in the Task Force, which should consider the need for a Standing Committee. The delegation of Finland then proposed that discussion of the draft Recommendation should be suspended and the draft Recommendation should be put to the vote. By a vote of four votes in favour, thirteen against and seven abstentions the draft Recommendation was not accepted. The Chairman noted the general agreement that the next host country should be a member of the Task Force and expressed the hope that the Task Force would discuss the question of a Standing Committee.

The delegation of Canada then introduced draft Recommendation 2.8 (Thanks to the Government of the Netherlands and Appreciation of Wetland Conservation Measures Taken in the Netherlands - later renumbered Recommendation 2.10). The delegation of the Netherlands asked that the words "and Markermeer" be deleted from the third paragraph since details had not been given of the conservation measures under consideration there, but was in agreement with the reference to the Markermeer in the sixth paragraph. The Recommendation was adopted.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany introduced draft Recommendation 2.9. The delegation of Australia requested that the reference to the Macquarie Marshes should include the words "Nature Reserve". The delegation of Japan stated that Lake Izunuma had for over fifty years been protected under national legislation, the Japanese authorities were currently negotiating with local authorities over designation of the area for the Ramsar List, and expected to reach agreement in the near future, it was therefore entirely appropriate for this site to be mentioned in the Recommendation. The delegation of the Netherlands proposed that Lake Tata in Hungary be added to the sites where appropriate conservation action should be taken, including where possible designation for the List, and confirmed that the delegation of Hungary had approved this suggestion. The Secretary-General recalled the request by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania that the reference to Lake Aleq and the Lake

of Mâl be included in Recommendation 2.9. The Recommendation was adopted by consensus.

#### Agenda item 14: Next Regular Conference of the Contracting Parties

The Chairman said that although there had been extensive deliberations on the venue for the next regular Conference of the Contracting Parties, no announcement could be made for the moment. The Secretary-General and others concerned would do all they could to make arrangements and to inform the Contracting Parties.

#### Closure of the Conference

Before the closure, the Secretary-General again reminded participants that the secretariat would welcome any amendments or improvements to the Draft Directory of Wetlands of International Importance (Document INF C2.4) and to the list of Administrative authorities responsible for implementing the Convention in each Contracting Party (Document INF. C2.7).

The Chairman then, on behalf of the participants, expressed thanks to the interpreters and to the many persons working behind the scenes.

The observer from the USA asked that his thanks to the Chairman and to the Netherlands delegation for their conduct of the Conference and their hospitality be placed on record. The observer expressed the USA's great interest in what was being done at the Conference. The delegation of Japan wished to be associated with the words of the USA and particularly thanked the secretariat. The delegation of Tunisia paid tribute to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, secretariat, rapporteurs, interpreters and all the technicians who had contributed. Thanks were due to the many national and international organizations that had made it possible for so many participants to attend the Conference. The Tunisian delegation expressed thanks to the national and provincial authorities in the Netherlands and ended on a note of hope and confidence in the future.

The Chairman declared the Conference closed at 12h10.