

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT

Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
27 May to 5 June 1987
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

First Session: 27 May 1987, 09h35 - 12h00

Chairman: Mr. D. Sherratt

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

Rapporteurs: Mr. A.J. Mence, Mr. Z.J. Karpowicz

Agenda item I: Opening of Meeting by Representatives of the Government of Canada

Mr. D. Sherratt, Director, Wildlife Branch, Saskatchewan Parks, Recreation and Culture, nominated by the delegation of Canada as provisional Chairman, opened the Meeting and after greeting the participants introduced the Hon. Pauline Browes, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Hon. Tom McMillan, Federal Minister of Environment. On behalf of the Minister of Environment she welcomed all participants to Canada, and assured them of the Government's commitment to the conservation of wetlands and of its support for the Convention. The Government recognized the need to strengthen the Convention, especially through an effective secretariat and improvements to the present text. She wished the Conference success in making progress in these matters.

The Chairman then introduced the Hon. Jack Klein, Minister of Urban Affairs, Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Klein welcomed the participants on behalf of the Premier and people of Saskatchewan. As a former Minister of Tourism, he felt a sense of pride in Saskatchewan's achievements in conservation and its commitment to conserving wetlands and to the Convention.

Agenda item II: Welcoming statements by international organizations

Having thanked the Hon. Ministers for their welcome and encouragement, the Chairman invited the representative of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) to address the Conference.

Dr. John Donaldson, Office of Legal Affairs, representing Dr. Bernd von Droste, Director, Division of Ecological Sciences, conveyed, on behalf of the Director General, Unesco's good wishes to the Parties for a successful meeting. He confirmed Unesco's willing support for the Convention, both as Depositary and through promotion of international cooperation. In particular, links were being strengthened between activities under the Ramsar Convention and those under both the Man and the Biosphere Programme and the Convention on the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Indeed, many important wetland areas had also been designated as Biosphere Reserves and/or as natural sites under the World Heritage Convention. Together these provided mutually reinforcing actions at local, national and

international levels in terms of social involvement, science, education and promotion. He wished the Parties success in their deliberations.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Donaldson for Unesco's support and good wishes; he then invited the representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to address the Conference.

Ms. Judy Johnson expressed UNEP's appreciation of the opportunity to participate in the meeting. UNEP cooperated with IUCN, IWRB and Unesco in promoting implementation of the Ramsar Convention, and had a central role in implementing two conventions which were complementary to it, providing secretariats for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS or Bonn Convention). As many species of waterfowl were migratory, the latter was of particular relevance to wetland conservation and gave opportunities for the conclusion of agreements with other range States concerning migratory species using wetlands.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Johnson for UNEP's support and then invited the representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) to address the Conference.

Dr. Kenton Miller, Director General, confirmed the importance IUCN placed upon the Ramsar Convention mobilizing international effort to conserve wetland habitats for nature conservation and human development needs. As the first of modern global nature conservation treaties, the Convention had initial structural deficiencies needing a lengthy process to redress, and this meeting could provide a significant step in this process. IUCN had been gratified by the confidence of the Contracting Parties in conferring upon it the responsibility for Bureau duties in collaboration with IWRB, and hoped that further measures would be taken to assure fully effective secretariat services. He expressed appreciation for support already provided, emphasized IUCN's continuing commitment to the Convention, and wished success in the coming deliberations.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Miller for IUCN's efforts and good wishes; then invited the representative of the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) to address the Conference.

Professor Geoffrey Matthews, Executive Director, after welcoming participants to the Conference, traced the development of the Convention from its conception at the MAR Conference 25 years ago, and spoke of the leading role of IWRB which had produced the first draft of a convention in 1963, together with an eight-point plan. On the basis of these, the Dutch Government had prepared a draft which had been examined at an intergovernmental conference in 1968. From this had arisen an alternative text sponsored by the Soviet Government. IWRB had then produced a composite text from the two drafts which had been refined by a technical conference. The decision had been taken that IWRB in association with IUCN should operate the new convention on behalf of the Parties as an alternative to setting up a self-contained, relatively costly secretariat. The final form had been reached at the Ramsar Conference. He emphasized the present need for urgent action to give further support for the operation of the Convention and wished the Parties success.

The Chairman thanked Professor Matthews for IWRB's efforts and good wishes, then invited

the representative of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to address the Conference.

Dr. Luc Hoffmann, WWF Vice-President, affirmed that wetland conservation was one of WWF's high priorities; two million Canadian dollars having been already devoted to it for this year alone for 44 projects on 5 continents. He expressed admiration for what the Convention had achieved with very little means, but distress at the loss of opportunities because of the inadequacy of funds. Although keen to do more, WWF was frustrated that so many Parties felt unable to share costs of this important effort, and looked to the Conference to provide adequate structure and funding. He observed that the Convention had evolved to be a useful tool for sustainable development, contributing to productivity, diversity of human habitat and preservation of ecological processes in both industrialized and developing countries. In conclusion he expressed particular pleasure in conveying the following message from the President of WWF, HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh:

“There is no need for me to emphasize the importance of this Third Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention. As the first of the major international conservation conventions, Ramsar has a particular significance for the whole conservation movement. If it is seen to be a success, it will stimulate a greater interest in the protection of wetlands all over the world, if it loses impetus and fails to organize itself properly, the consequences for the natural environment will be very serious indeed.

“The first priority for the Conference must, therefore, be the establishment of an effective and adequately funded secretariat. I would hope that this will lead to the recruitment of more Parties to the Convention, particularly among those countries with internationally important wetlands but which may not have the resources to give them adequate protection.

“Ramsar presently has 44 Contracting Parties and 350 wetlands covering 22 million hectares have been designated under the Convention. This can be seen as a very satisfactory achievement, but only if all those areas are effectively protected and managed.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to send this message of greeting to all delegates, and to say how much I am looking forward to joining you in a few days' time. Meanwhile I would like to wish you all success in your deliberations. They will have a major influence on the future survival of the world's last remaining wetlands, as well as on the conservation of nature as a whole.”

Agenda item III: Adoption of the Agenda

The Conference adopted document C.3.1: Draft Agenda without debate.

Agenda item IV: Adoption of Rules of Procedure

The Chairman brought to the attention of the Conference the Rules of Procedure document C.3.3 (Rev.) and a further document which had been made available immediately prior to the start of the First Session of the Conference entitled “Note from the Task Force: Amendments Proposed by the Contracting Parties to the Documents Prepared by the Bureau on the Instructions of the Task Force”. The Secretary-General informed the Conference of two further adjustments to the text of document C.3.3 (Rev.), concerning Rule 2 - Observers, paragraph (2) (b) last line and Rule 10 - Submission of Proposals and Amendments Thereto, paragraph (2), lines two and three. In the first case the words “Parties decide” should be

replaced by “Conference decides”. In the second case, the words “Delegates participating in the Conference so decide” should be replaced by the words “Conference so decides”.

The Chairman invited the delegation of the Netherlands, Convenor of the Task Force, to present a brief report on the preparation of document C.3.3 (Rev.). The delegation of the Netherlands explained the deliberations of the Task Force on this subject and noted that an effort had been made to provide a permanent basis for Rules of Procedure for future meetings of the Conference. He noted that an opportunity had been given for every Contracting Party to submit comments to the Task Force. Written comments submitted had been incorporated as fully as possible. The delegation of the Netherlands invited Contracting Parties to adopt document C.3.3 (Rev.) with the two adjustments noted above as Rules of Procedure for the Conference.

The Conference then adopted document C.3.3 (Rev.) with the two adjustments as Rules of Procedure for the Conference without debate.

Agenda item V: Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen

The delegation of Norway proposed the provisional Chairman, Mr. D. Sherratt, of the delegation of Canada, for election as Chairman of the Third Meeting of the Conference. The delegation of Australia seconded the proposal.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany proposed Mr. V. Koester, from the delegation of Denmark, for election as one Vice-Chairman of the Conference. The delegation of the Netherlands seconded the proposal.

The delegation of the Netherlands proposed Mr. A.L. Rao, from the delegation of Pakistan, for election as one Vice-Chairman of the Conference. The delegation of Tunisia seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Jordan stressed the desirability of electing Vice-Chairmen from both Asia and Europe. The Secretary-General pointed out that the newly adopted Rules of Procedure provided for the election of two Vice-Chairmen and that these two nominations adequately covered the point raised by the delegation of Jordan.

The Conference by consensus elected Mr. D. Sherratt as Chairman of the Third Meeting of the Conference and Mr. V. Koester and Mr. A.L. Rao as Vice-Chairmen of the Third Meeting of the Conference.

Agenda item VI: Appointment of Credentials and Other Committees

Pursuant to Rules 3(3) and 21 of the Rules of Procedure the Chairman invited proposals for appointment to a Credentials Committee consisting of five delegates.

The delegation of New Zealand proposed a member of the delegation of Australia for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of Ireland seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Norway proposed a member of the delegation of Suriname for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of Portugal seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Pakistan proposed a member of the delegation of Canada for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of Sweden seconded the proposal.

The delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposed a member of the delegation of Hungary for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of Finland seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Canada proposed a member of the delegation of France for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of the United States of America seconded the proposal.

The Conference appointed a Credentials Committee by consensus consisting of members of the delegations of Australia, Canada, France, Hungary and Suriname.

Agenda item VII: Admission of Observers

Pursuant to Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary-General noted that provision was made for participation in the meeting of the Conference by international agencies or bodies, and national governmental and approved non-governmental agencies or bodies, provided the Contracting Parties present did not decide otherwise. He further pointed out that the Annex to document C.3.14 listed bodies and agencies which had informed the Bureau of their desire to be represented at the Meeting by observers. This list was subsequently expanded to include the addition of CIC (Conseil International de la Chasse et de la Conservation du Gibier), Ducks Unlimited Inc. (USA), Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Saskatchewan Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department, and WWF-USA.

The Conference accepted by consensus the admission of these observers.

Agenda item VIII: Report of Convention Bureau

The Chairman invited the Secretary-General to present a brief report on the developments under the Convention since the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Groningen, Netherlands, May 1984). The Secretary-General drew the attention of the Conference to the Report of the Convention Bureau, document C.3.4, which he proceeded to review, highlighting points of particular importance. With reference to Section II of the report he mentioned that Niger had recently acceded to the Convention and that in addition to Egypt and Mali, Bolivia and Uganda were in the process of finalizing their accession procedures. The Secretary-General informed the Conference on the status of the Ramsar List. It was dealt with in Section IV and presented as document INF. C.3.3. Two new important designations were noted: the designation of the Danish sector of the Waddensea and the designation of "W" National Park by Niger. Document INF. C.3.4 had been published as the "Directory of Wetlands of International Importance". This was an update of the draft Directory submitted to the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Groningen. Being computerized the information could be continually and rapidly updated and corrected and users of the Directory were urged to notify the IUCN Conservation Monitoring Centre of any changes. Owing to a lack of funding the Directory was presently available only in English although it was hoped that other language versions might be produced at a later date.

Bureau communications with the Contracting Parties had been formalized through Notifications. To ensure the continued smooth transmittal of information all Contracting

Parties were urged to check the addresses given for the focal points in each country as they appeared in document INF. C.3.10 and to inform the Convention Bureau of any changes.

In relation to Section IX of the report, the Secretary-General wished to register IUCN's deep appreciation for the generosity, support and cooperation given by the Government of Canada in the preparations for the Regina Conference. The Secretary-General mentioned a number of promotional cooperative activities which had taken place or were continuing, including the preparation of a series of continental directories of important wetlands (Neotropical, Australasian, African and Asian) and the trilingual Ramsar Brochure.

During the period under review voluntary contributions to the Convention Bureau had been received and these had been detailed in document C.3.4. Annex. In addition to these, a number of countries (Federal Republic of Germany, France, Sweden and the United States of America) had offered significant support in kind and indirectly towards the preparation for the Regina Conference. A contribution from Tunisia earmarked for 1986 had only just surfaced and would be incorporated into the 1987 accounts. The Secretary-General concluded that much had been accomplished but that much more needed to be done.

Agenda item XI: Presentation of Task Force Report by Convenor.

On the invitation of the Chairman the delegation of the Netherlands, as convenor of the Task Force, presented a brief report (document C.3.5) on the work of the Ramsar Convention Task Force. The delegation of the Netherlands proposed that the Conference accept the report, and at the same time expressed its gratitude to the other members of the Task Force, to those countries which had put forward comments and to the IUCN and IWRB for their supportive role during meetings and deliberations of the Task Force.

The Chairman added his compliments and invited Contracting Parties to comment on the report. The delegation of Australia expressed its great appreciation to the Task Force for its highly professional work and for the preparation of a commendable report.

The Chairman adjourned the session at 12h00.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Second Session: 27 May 1987, 14h45 - 17h00

Chairman: Mr. D. Sherratt

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

Rapporteurs Mr. Z.J. Karpowicz, Ms. C. Pirrie (Assistant Rapporteur)

Agenda item X: International Overview Reports

In line with the provisions of Article 6, paragraph 2(c) of the Convention, six international audio-visual reports were presented, which focused upon the status of wetlands, wetland species and particular conservation concerns in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe. The Chairman invited the Assistant Secretary-General to introduce the speakers. The Assistant Secretary-General stressed that the presentations were not intended to detract from the Review of National Reports due to be given on 2 and 3 June but to provide an overview of global wetland problems and experiences.

Dr. P. Dugan gave an overview presentation on the conservation of the world's wetland resources.

Dr. Carlos F. Ponce presented a lecture entitled: "La conservación de los humedales (zonas húmedas) y el desarrollo sostenible" (Wetland conservation and sustainable development).

Dr. H.N. Chabwela presented a paper entitled: "Wetlands conservation issues in Africa: an Overview".

Dr. M. Carbonell presented a paper entitled: "El papel del IWRB en el estudio y conservación de los humedales o zonas húmedas en la Región Neotropical" (The role of IWRB in the study and conservation of Neotropical wetlands).

Mr. D. Parish presented a paper entitled: "The importance and status of wetlands in Asia".

Mr. J. van der Ven presented a paper entitled: "Wetlands in Europe: Policy and Future".

The full texts of all four papers will be included in the Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

The Chairman thanked all the speakers and adjourned the session at 17h00.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Third Session: 1 June 1987, 11h15 - 12h15

Chairman: Mr. D. Sherratt

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

Rapporteurs: Mr. A.J. Mence, Mr. R. Osterwoldt

Opening of the Meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting and drew attention to the start of Canada's Environment Week that morning.

The Secretary-General apologized for the omission of the document number from the French version of PLEN. C.3.1. He announced two spelling errors to be corrected as follows:

Document PLEN. C.3.1: for Mr. D. Sherratt read Mr. D. Sherratt throughout, and on page 3 paragraph 3: for Dr. Luc Hoffman read Dr. Luc Hoffmann.

He apologized to the individuals concerned and assured them that the necessary corrections would be made.

The Chairman then presented the reports of the two preceding plenary sessions, PLEN. C.3.1 and PLEN. C.3.2.

Subject to the foregoing amendments, these were adopted.

Agenda item XII: Report of the Credentials Committee

The Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Mr. A. Mégret of France, reported that 27 credentials had been found in order and that confirmation of the credentials of one other delegation was awaited and would be the subject of a further report.

Agenda item XIII: Results of the Extraordinary Conference

The Chairman of the Extraordinary Conference, Mr. V. Koester, Denmark, explained that this item had been included on the assumption that the Extraordinary Conference would have been concluded. This was not the case, but all information was already available to Parties through their own participation and the two reports issued (document PLEN. E.2.1 and PLEN. E.2.2).

Agenda item XIV: Institutional Arrangements

Secretariat Matters

The Chairman of the Task Force, Mr. F. van Rijckevorsel of the Netherlands, drew attention to wording discrepancies in document C.3.7, which were explained by the Secretary-General as follows:

Document C.3.7 Attachment 1;

- Title to read DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT.
- IWRB title to read "International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau".
- First sentence of last paragraph to read "To this end IWRB shall establish a distinct unit which shall be entrusted with the performance of the tasks mentioned in paragraph 1 above".
- "United Kingdom" in first paragraph on page 2 to be replaced by "the country where IWRB is located".

Document C.3.7 Annex, page 2;

- f) "Switzerland" to be replaced by "the country where IUCN is located".
- g) "United Kingdom" to be replaced by "the country where IWRB is located".

The Chairman of the Task Force continued his report by explaining that the Task Force had examined various options for securing secretariat functions. A questionnaire had been circulated to various organizations which might have been prepared to provide such service, but only IUCN and IWRB had given a positive response, supported moreover with an activity analysis and costings. The options theoretically possible were: 1) an autonomous unit specially established by the Parties, 2) a Contracting Party, 3) an existing international organization, 4) a unit formed in an existing organization, responsible to and funded by the Parties. The Task Force had pursued the fourth option as the most promising, formed by a joint arrangement with IUCN and IWRB. It believed the other options to be more costly and less effective, and recommended accordingly.

The Chairman thanked the Task Force for its work.

The Secretary-General explained that document C.3.7 contained the conclusions of the Task Force as circulated by Bureau Notification 85/9 of November 1985. He confirmed that the

Convention already permitted such an arrangement and said that representatives of both IUCN and IWRB were available to sign an agreement as called for in document C.3.7.

The unit within IUCN would have prime responsibility for administrative and diplomatic matters, while that of IWRB would have prime responsibility for technical, scientific and promotional matters. although interchange would take place as appropriate.

The Chairman noted that this presentation of the Task Force recommendation constituted a proposal by the delegation of the Netherlands. The Netherlands agreed and the proposal was seconded by the delegation of Pakistan.

The observer from IUCN stated that policy established by the IUCN General Assembly and instructions from the IUCN Council gave him authority to sign the Memorandum of Agreement as presented.

The observer from IWRB confirmed his organization's readiness to co-operate with IUCN in support of the Convention and to sign the Memorandum of Agreement.

The delegation of France confirmed its approval of the proposal, and recommended that Secretariat posts should be widely advertised to attract best recruits.

The delegation of Spain expressed hope for general agreement to the proposal, but observed that, although it provided for IWRB's function in monitoring and scientific services, it should be recognized that Member States had this responsibility. Such work might be done to best advantage in the areas under investigation using local resources, expertise and training opportunities. IUCN also had a wide network of expert consultants. Some of the budgetary provision should be available to enable these potential resources to be tapped.

The delegation of the United Kingdom endorsed the general principle of the Task Force's recommendations, but questioned whether the Standing Committee would be responsible to the Conference. Regarding the Draft Memorandum of Agreement, the delegation considered that there should be greater uniformity of terminology between and within the Draft Resolution on Secretariat Matters and the Draft Memorandum of Agreement, using the terms "administrative", "scientific" and "technical" support as appropriate.

The delegation of Australia expressed support for the principle of a shared secretariat, but considered that the legal obligations implied would require written acceptance by IUCN and IWRB to the Depositary.

The Chairman requested the Task Force to work together with concerned delegations outside the meeting to refine as necessary the provisions of document C.3.7 and report accordingly to a future session.

The meeting was adjourned at 12h15.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Fourth Session: 1 June 1987, 14h15 - 17h15

Chairman: Mr. D. Sherratt

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

Secretary-General of the Conference)
Rapporteurs: Mr. R.Osterwoldt, Mr. Z. Karpowicz

Agenda item XIV: Institutional arrangements (continued)

The discussion of document C.3.7. on secretariat matters continued at 14h15. The Secretary-General clarified a number of questions raised earlier. The observer from WWF-USA had pointed out an apparent inconsistency in the draft resolution on secretariat matters between the first preambular paragraph which included the words "IUCN as the Bureau" and the operative sub-paragraph 1(a) which stated that "IUCN shall establish a Convention Bureau". The Secretary-General suggested new wording as follows:

"RECALLING Article 8 of the Convention which provides that IUCN shall perform the continuing Bureau duties under the Convention,"

and suggested the substitution of "IUCN" for the word "Bureau" in the second and third preambular paragraphs.

These amendments met with the general approval of the Conference.

The delegation of Australia had suggested that the Director-General of IUCN and the Director of IWRB write letters to the Director-General of Unesco as the Convention's Depository to show their acceptance of commitments assigned to them by the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The representative of Unesco suggested that, as the Depository normally circulated only notifications from Member States or Parties, such acceptance of duties might be more conveniently recorded in the formal report and thereby taken note of by the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The delegation of Australia stated that Unesco as Depository could simply circulate such formal letters of acceptance to avoid the potential awkwardness of IUCN circulating a letter about its own obligations.

The delegation of Spain had requested clarification of the draft Memorandum of Agreement (document C.3.7, Attachment 1, operative paragraph 1) and the words "monitoring and scientific advisory services". It also expressed concern about the words "subject to the availability of funds" in operative paragraphs 4 and 5, suggesting that the reference to the instructions of the Conference of the Parties, as provided in the Convention budget, should be adequate. Further, he suggested that the last sentence of operative paragraph 7 be deleted.

Upon the explanation of the Secretary-General that the monitoring referred to in operative paragraph 1) was not meant to imply any monitoring of the Parties but rather a continuing preparation of the information on wetland sites, such as shadow lists, the delegation of Spain further clarified its position as follows. Certain scientific support and services would be needed, which would be of two kinds: first those of a continuing and permanent nature to be carried out by units of the Convention Bureau, which should be defined and specified in the Memorandum of Agreement between the IUCN and IWRB, and second those of an occasional and temporary nature providing scientific services in the field as the need arose in particular areas or concerning particular subjects. The advantages of such a dual provision of scientific services were that where long-standing and homogenous monitoring was required, permanent units would be in place, and in particular problem areas, staff and services funded by all Parties would return to those countries affected by the problem as a positive reinvestment of their contributions to the Convention.

The delegation of Spain proposed the following amended wording of operative paragraph 1):

“IWRB shall cooperate with IUCN in the provision of permanent Bureau services. In particular, it shall be responsible for the analysis and treatment of information provided by the Parties in all matters concerning the implementation of the Convention, as well as any other tasks of a scientific nature that may be entrusted to the permanent Bureau by the Conference of the Parties.”

The observer from IWRB suggested that the amendment of the delegation of Spain could not restrict the activity of the IWRB as set out in the draft Memorandum of Agreement operative paragraph 1) but rather that the Spanish amendment should be directed at operative paragraph 2).

The delegation of the United Kingdom associated itself with the concerns of the delegation of Spain that the Task Force recommendation had not been fully reflected in the draft Memorandum of Agreement. Regarding its earlier comment on the definition of the Bureau, the delegation reiterated its concept of a single Bureau with two units, one located within IUCN and the other located within IWRB, both of which were independent of the IUCN and IWRB and whose workplan and budget were the responsibility of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The delegation of the United Kingdom proposed amended wording to the draft resolution on secretariat matters (document C.3.7 Annex, operative paragraph 1(a) and (c)) as follows:

“1 (a) A Convention Bureau shall be established to perform the administrative, scientific, and technical tasks as required by the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

“(b) The policy to be followed by the Bureau shall be determined by the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

“(c) The Convention Bureau shall comprise two integrated units funded by the Convention budget:

- (i) a unit attached to IUCN, and
- (ii) a unit attached to IWRB.”

The delegation of the United Kingdom stated that the current reference in paragraph 1 (c) to a cooperative agreement between IUCN and IWRB should be retained in some form in a later paragraph.

The delegation of Tunisia suggested that to avoid delay the amendment be drafted by proposing delegations in conjunction with the Secretariat and the Task Force.

The delegation of Switzerland supported the delegation of Tunisia by suggesting that the proposals of the delegations of Spain and the United Kingdom be discussed before the text of either the Memorandum of Agreement or the resolution be redrafted. It noted that the United Kingdom concept of two units did not appear to be in accord with the Ramsar Convention Article 8 which specified IUCN as the organization entrusted with the task of performing Bureau duties. Activity by the IWRB should still be under the responsibility and guidance of the IUCN as clearly stated in the draft resolution (document C.3.7, Annex, operative

paragraph 1 (e)).

The delegation of Australia interpreted Article 8 as entrusting IUCN with the duties until such time as a new organization was created, and asked whether the Bureau as constituted by this Conference of the Contracting Parties would be a “new organization”.

The Secretary-General reminded delegations that the Task Force had rejected the option of a new organization in recommending that the Bureau duties be performed by existing organizations. The actual units of the Bureau would be independent of the IUCN and the IWRB but would remain under their administrative direction; they would not be legally separate entities.

The delegation of Chile emphasized that the functions of the units should be very specifically delineated to avoid overlap, because current Contracting Parties and potential new Contracting Parties would require clarity.

The delegation of Greece emphasized the necessity for the Bureau to support all activities entrusted to it by the Conference of the Contracting Parties, not just in the provision of information. Active co-operation between the Bureau and competent national authorities should focus on wetland management projects and should include technical support, bibliography and exchange of experiences.

Financial and Budgetary Matters

The Chairman invited the delegation of Sweden to present document C.3.8 on financial and budgetary matters. The delegation of Sweden said that the Task Force of the Contracting Parties had prepared a triennial budget, and urged the Conference of the Contracting Parties to adopt the draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters set out in the Annex to document C.3.8. In addition, the delegation of Sweden referred delegations to attachments to document C.3.8 as follows:

Attachment 2 - the scales of contribution,

Attachment 3 - the Terms of Reference for the financial administration of the Convention,

Attachments 1 and 4 - the itemized budget for 1988-1990.

The Chairman invited the delegation of Tunisia to comment on the scale of contributions in Attachment 2. The delegation of Tunisia indicated that contributions were based on the capacity of Contracting Parties to contribute to the budget. The United Nations schedule formed the basis for distribution of percentage shares of the total budget to individual Contracting Parties. The annual share was one third of the estimated costs over the three-year period of the budget as set out in Attachment 1.

The Secretary-General presented detailed comments on the budget, which he stated had been drawn up by the Bureau on instructions from the Task Force. He referred to the Note from the Task Force which proposed that the Contracting Parties add two paragraphs to the Annex to document c.3.8 as follows:

(i) a new final preambular paragraph should be added to the existing three to read:

“RECOGNIZING the urgency there is to provide financial support to the Convention Bureau with minimal delay”

(ii) a new operative paragraph 5 should be added following the existing operative paragraph 4 (necessitating renumbering the following paragraphs), to read:

“PARTICULARLY URGES all Contracting Parties to make their first contribution to the Convention budget as early as possible in 1988,”

The Secretary-General indicated several minor amendments to the draft resolution text in consequence of the amendments adopted in the Extraordinary Conference as follows:

(i) to number the second sub-paragraph starting with the words “The Conference” as number 5 and the third sub-paragraph starting with the words “each Contracting Party” as number 6,

(ii) to insert in the English text the words “the Contracting” before the word “Parties” in the second sub-paragraph and the word “Contracting” before the word “Parties” in the third sub-paragraph,

(iii) to delete in the English text “unanimous vote” and insert “unanimity”, in the second line of the sub-paragraph newly numbered 6,

(iv) in operative paragraph 2, to delete the words “assessment for the”.

The Secretary-General explained the itemized budget. A readjustment of the estimated costs in the budget set out in Attachment 1 had been necessitated because of the fall of the United States dollar as against the Swiss franc and the British pound and therefore Attachment 1 (Rev.) was presented. Salary costs were based on the civil service salary scales in Switzerland and the United Kingdom and were less than salaries of United Nations staff. An increase of 7% per year had been provided for as a precautionary measure.

Expert services were listed in three categories:

(i) scientific expert work,

(ii) legal support, which would hopefully decrease because the Convention and Protocol texts were complete although increasing environmental law work for wetland conservation plans was envisaged, and

(iii) data and information services, which were a logical continuation of past directory projects.

Travel on official business was necessary. The purchase of equipment allocation was predicated on the assumption that the IUCN and IWRB would provide basic equipment. The estimated cost for administrative services by IUCN and IWRB was not meant to represent rent but rather to cover overhead for facilities used such as mail service, library, and computer equipment and had been calculated on the basis of experience that such administrative services amounted to 24% of the salary component and approximately 11% of the entire budget. The need for telecommunications was self-evident. With respect to the

allocation of US\$ 15,000 per year for reporting, the Secretary-General suggested that that might be somewhat low and stated that translation of Convention documents was only in the two official languages currently used, English and French.

Budget item 8 provided support to delegations especially from developing countries to travel to Conferences of the Contracting Parties and other meetings such as those of the Standing Committee.

Budget item 10 provided for a contingency fund which could cover costs as required in the case of delays or short-falls in contributions. The Secretary-General referred to paragraph 8 of the Terms of Reference, which provided that the Standing Committee could authorize the transfer of funds between budget lines to cover short-falls in a particular budget line.

The Secretary-General presented Attachment 3 to document C.3.8, Terms of Reference for the financial administration of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. These Terms of Reference were based on those for two other conservation conventions - CITES (Endangered Species Trade) and CMS (Migratory Species), and included provision for a separate account, a financial period of three years, transfer of funds between budget lines, and audits.

The Secretary-General presented Attachment 4 to document C.3.a, a budget for 1988 to 1990 with estimated costs expressed in Swiss francs which was a more constant currency than U.S. dollars.

The Secretary-General presented Attachment 5 to document C.3.8, a chart of contributions under the International Global Conservation Conventions comparing the Ramsar proposed budget with the budgets of the World Heritage, Migratory Species and CITES Conventions. Attachment 5 (Rev.) had been necessitated by the receipt of the CITES proposed budget for 1988-89.

The Chairman invited comments of the delegations on Attachment 3 to document C.3.8, the Terms of Reference.

The delegation of the United Kingdom, supported by the delegation of the United States, proposed an amendment of the wording of operative paragraphs 7 and 8 to delete the word "advice" and substitute the word "approval" before the words "of the Standing Committee".

The observer of WWF-USA asked why contributions by non-governmental organizations should be screened by the Conference of the Contracting Parties as indicated in paragraph 2 b), and agreed with the Secretary-General's subsequent explanation that such screening to ensure appropriate contributions should be by the Standing Committee as successfully done under the CITES Convention.

The Chairman noted that there were no further comments from the floor and that Attachment 3 to document C.3.8 would be tabled, as amended, for approval at a later session.

The Chairman invited comments on the budget as set out in Attachment 1 (Rev.) and Attachment 4 to document C.3.8.

The delegation of Ireland made four points:

- (i) regarding item 1 of the budget, staff costs, “social charges” should be defined;
- (ii) the delegation asked whether the budget was based on current costs expended to service the Ramsar Convention;
- (iii) the delegation asked whether there were hidden staff costs under item 5, administrative services, which should rather be included under item 1, staff costs;
- (iv) the allocation for item 9, contingency fund, was considered too high.

The Secretary-General responded to the above points as follows:

- (i) social charges included payments for social security, pension, salary insurance, health insurance, numerous payments which were mandatory in Switzerland, and which were calculated as a percentage of the salary;
- (ii) the budget generally reflected expenditures to date by IUCN and IWRB paid out from voluntary contributions by some Contracting Parties but did not include salary costs incurred by IUCN or IWRB for those members of its personnel which performed Bureau duties;
- (iii) it would be difficult to filter those aspects of item 5 which included some staff services and assign a staff cost for inclusion in item 1;
- (iv) the amount of the contingency fund was set at about 10% of the total budget based on the experience of other Conventions.

The delegation of Ireland suggested that staff costs hidden in item 5 be quantified and included in item 1, and that the contingency fund should only amount to 5% of the total budget.

The delegation of the USSR stated that its country and perhaps other countries were unfortunately not in a position to comment on financial and budgetary matters. It noted that at the Meeting in Groningen, the Conference of the Contracting Parties had decided that those countries which did not sign the Paris Protocol would not be Parties to the Ramsar Convention as amended, but only Parties to the original text of the Ramsar Convention. Since some countries had not as yet signed the Paris Protocol and because the original text of the Ramsar Convention contained no articles which dealt with financial or administrative questions or with the amendment of the Convention text, it remarked that those countries could not discuss financial and budgetary details, and that this explained the current inability of the delegation of the USSR to offer suggestions on this agenda item.

The delegation of the United States sought clarification on the following points:

- (i) on item 2, expert services, it was not aware that any consultative services had been done as yet and asked whether this referred to work to be done by the IWRB; and
- (ii) on item 5, it requested clarification of the words “includes office facilities”.

The Secretary-General responded to the request of the delegation of the United States as

follows:

(i) while consultative services had not yet been contracted out, the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention had set out “action points” and the kind of work would determine whether the IWRB’s reservoir of expertise or scientists from other organizations, associations or government departments would be required.

(ii) the words in item 5 “includes office facilities” meant common facilities such as receptionist areas, hallways, washrooms, etc. for which maintenance and overhead costs were shared by those using them, but the words did not mean rent.

The Director General of IUCN confirmed that it was general policy at IUCN to share such costs and that 24% of salary costs or 11% of the total budget would cover the costs anticipated under item 5. The delegation of the IWRB agreed.

The delegation of the United States expressed satisfaction with those responses.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany stated that the budget was well done in general but perhaps too generous on some points upon which changes were proposed as follows:

(i) on item 1, staff costs, to deduct US\$ 10,000 from the salary budget line. It was suggested that one professional would not necessarily require one administrative assistant.

(ii) on item 2, expert services, to deduct US\$ 10,000 from consultancies and thereby to reduce the estimated cost to US\$ 30,000 per year.

(iii) on item 8, support to delegations for meeting participation, to delete “notably from developing countries” and substitute “from least developed countries” and to deduct US\$ 5,000 to reduce the estimated cost to US\$ 15,000 per year.

(iv) on item 10, contingency fund, to delete reference to delay or short-fall in contributions in order not to give some Parties the idea that delays or short-falls were expected and therefore acceptable, and to substitute the words “to cover unexpected events”, and to deduct US\$ 10,000 in order to reduce the annual allocation to US\$ 25,000.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany suggested that thereby some US\$ 35,000 per year could be saved.

The delegation of France suggested that because exchange rate fluctuations might be advantageous rather than disadvantageous, in the case where they might be advantageous a fund should be opened to cover short-falls which would otherwise be covered by the proposed contingency fund.

The delegation of Tunisia stated that because of the need to encourage more participation by developing countries in the Convention, the current allocation of US\$ 20,000 per year for item 8, “Support to delegates for meeting participation”, was insufficient.

The delegation of Morocco expressed agreement with Tunisia but suggested that any increased allocation for item 8 should not be made at the cost of item 7, reporting, which was

also of great importance to disseminate information and increase awareness about the aims and activities under the Convention.

The delegation of Denmark differed with the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany on whether the budget estimated costs needed reduction. It would not favour cuts in staff costs and would increase estimated costs for telecommunications and reporting. Generally it was content with the budget allocations as presented.

The Chairman closed this session at 17h15.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Fifth Session: 2 June 1987, 09h05 - 12h15

Chairmen: Mr. V. Koester (to 10h20), Mr. D. Sherratt (from 11h00)

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

Rapporteurs: Mr. A.J. Mence, Mr. Z.J. Karpowicz, Ms. C. Pirrie

Opening of the Session

The Chairman opened the session at 09h05 and invited the Secretary-General to inform the Conference of the latest developments concerning document C.3.7.

Agenda item XIV: Institutional Arrangements (continued)

Secretariat Matters (continued)

The Secretary-General explained that an expanded Task Force meeting which had taken place the previous night had prepared document C.3.7 Rev. incorporating points arising from that day's Plenary Session.

Several minor amendments had been made to the Annex to document C.3.7. The first paragraph of that document had been brought into line with the Convention text and "IUCN" was substituted for the word "Bureau" in the second and third preambular paragraphs.

There had been changes to sub-paragraphs (a) and (b). These two sub-paragraphs had been amended to read as follows:

"a) A Convention Bureau shall be provided by IUCN through the establishment of an integrated unit which is funded from the Convention budget and which performs all the tasks required by the Conference of the Contracting Parties. It shall comprise a section attached to IUCN and a section attached to IWRB;

"b) The policy to be followed by the Bureau shall be determined by the Conference of the Contracting Parties and, between meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the Bureau shall operate under the supervision of the Standing Committee;"

Sub-paragraphs (f) and (g) had been amended by replacing the reference to "Switzerland" and the "United Kingdom" respectively with the phrases "the country where IUCN is located" and "the country where IWRB is located". "Contracting" had been added before the

word “Parties” where appropriate. In sub-paragraph (c) the words “monitoring and” had been deleted.

In Attachment 1 to the Annex of document C.3.7, the word “DRAFT” had been added before the words “MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT”, and IWRB’s name had been amended to include “and Wetlands”. Paragraphs 1 and 2 had been simplified to remove policy statements, leaving only a factual account of the relationship between IUCN and IWRB. Finally, the last sentence in paragraph 7 had been deleted.

The Chairman suggested that further interventions from the floor were unnecessary as a very full discussion of the amendments had already taken place.

The delegation of Canada pointed out that IWRB’s title had not been amended in the signature section of the Draft Memorandum of Agreement.

The observer from IWRB proposed the addition of the words “technical and” between the words “provide” and “scientific” in line 3 of sub-paragraph (c) on page 2 of the Draft Resolution.

These amendments met with the general approval of the Conference and the Draft Resolution was adopted by consensus.

The Chairman then referred to the Draft Memorandum of Agreement and invited the Secretary-General to clarify a point raised earlier by the delegation of Spain concerning paragraph 3 on page 2 of Attachment 1.

The Secretary-General explained that the final sentence in paragraph 3 was thought necessary because the budget and procedures had not yet been established and uncertainties remained on the future flow of funds into the Convention budget.

The delegation of Spain stated the opinion that the sentence should be removed. The Chairman asked if any delegation seconded this proposal. There was none and paragraph 3 remained unchanged.

The delegation of Canada asked for a clarification of the exact title of the chief executive officer of IWRB, as it appeared in paragraph 2 of the Draft Memorandum of Agreement. The observer from IWRB stated that the correct title was “Executive Director”, and that in addition the word “Wetland” in the title of IWRB was plural. The Chairman noted these amendments, adding that the words “United Kingdom” in paragraph 3 be replaced by the words “country where it is located”.

With these amendments the Draft Memorandum of Agreement was approved by consensus.

Financial and Budgetary Matters

The Chairman invited comments on the Budget 1988-1990 as set out in Attachment 1 (Rev.) to document C.3.8, pointing out that only a short time was available for further discussion. The delegation of Switzerland stated that the Chairman should provide Contracting Parties with the opportunity to put forward proposals concerning financial and budgetary matters. The Chairman confirmed that this was not the last session at which there would be an

opportunity to discuss the budget.

The delegation of Norway, speaking also on behalf of the delegation of Finland, and concurring with a statement by the delegation of Denmark the previous day, stated that both countries could accept the budget but felt that it was a minimum one. Referring to item 2, expert services, the delegation of Norway suggested that, in addition to the permanent Bureau's capabilities in this field, expert outside advice would be required and suggested that the budget for this item be increased. The delegation of Norway further suggested that the budget item 7, reporting, be increased from US\$15,000 to US\$30,000. It also agreed with statements by the delegations of Morocco and Tunisia with regard to increasing the amount in budget item 8. It pointed out that the sum presently envisaged was only twice the amount expended by Norway in supporting delegates from developing countries at the present Meeting of the Conference.

The Chairman then invited comments on Attachment 2 to document C.3.8, emphasizing that this was a preliminary discussion since no budget had yet been established. He stressed that a general discussion on principles was required.

The delegation of Spain, referring to Attachment 1 (Rev.), expressed agreement with the budget and stated that the suggestions by the delegation of Norway had the support of the Spanish delegation. Referring to Attachment 2, it asked for clarification as to how the figures were calculated.

The Chairman pointed out that the UN scale of assessment had been used as a basis for calculation, but because not all the countries in the UN were represented in the Convention, a 100% figure was obtained by extrapolation.

The delegation of the United States reminded Contracting Parties of its statement at the Extraordinary Conference on Article 6 paragraph 6. The United States should not therefore be included in the list for the scale of contributions. It stated, however, that the United States intended to provide a voluntary contribution which would not change the percentage contributions of the other Contracting Parties.

The Chairman said that the only negative comment on the principle employed in Attachment 2 had been made by the delegation of the United States. He confirmed that there were no objections from any other delegation.

The Chairman drew the delegates' attention to the problem of fluctuations in exchange rates and the difficulties that this presented in calculating the budget in US dollars. He proposed that in order to avoid these in the future, the budget and annual share of contributions be made in Swiss Francs, the currency in which most budget expenditure would be incurred. This met with general acceptance by the Conference.

Establishment of a Standing Committee

The Chairman invited the delegation of Sweden to present document C.3.9 on the establishment of a Standing Committee. The delegation of Sweden, on behalf of the Task Force and also of the delegations of Finland and Norway, reminded the Conference of the draft recommendation put forward at the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties for the establishment of a representative subsidiary body of the

Conference of the Contracting Parties which might function between Meetings of the Conference. Having reviewed the work of the Task Force in this regard, it recommended the Conference to adopt the draft resolution for the establishment of a Standing Committee set out in the Annex to document C.3.9.

The Secretary-General referred to the document entitled Note from the Task Force, to be read in connection with the Annex to document C.3.9, and reported that the following comments had been received and were endorsed by the Task Force:

- i) to delete the word “voting” in paragraph 2, second line first word.
- ii) to replace the word “seven” in sub-paragraph 2a), first line, with the word “nine”.
- iii) to add the words “as an observer” after the word “participate” in sub-paragraph 2b), third line, on page 2.
- iv) to incorporate the footnote text into sub-paragraph e) as a last sentence immediately following on the word “nominated,”.
- v) to replace the word “current” in the third line of the footnote text by the word “third”.

The Chairman invited the delegation of the Netherlands, as the Chairman of the Task Force, to comment on the Draft Resolution for the establishment of a Standing Committee.

The Chairman of the Task Force noted that the necessity for a Standing Committee had been amply demonstrated but wished to clarify its possible composition in relation to sub-paragraph 2a) of the draft resolution. With regard to the need for geographical distribution of Parties nominated to the Standing Committee, seven regions had been identified, namely: North America, Latin America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania. To these would be added the host countries of the past and future Meetings of the Conference, with the permanent host countries of the Bureau as observers/advisors. The Standing Committee would thus consist of up to nine full members and two observers/advisors. He asked that delegates consider which Contracting Party might represent their regions.

The Chairman invited comments on the Annex to document C.3.9.

The delegation of the United States observed that the draft resolution was based on similar texts in other conservation conventions, which had, however, needed amendment due to problems which had arisen. This suggested a need to expand the oversight function in sub-paragraph c) of paragraph 1 to read:

“Supervise, as a representative of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the implementation of policy by the Bureau, the execution of the Bureau’s budget, and conduct of the Bureau’s programmatic operations”.

The Chairman considered this to be a useful amendment. The delegation of Austria then made the following statement:

“It is our opinion that not only in the case of the proposed decisions on the budget but also in

the case of the Standing Committee the legal basis cannot be found in the Convention in force. A legal foundation could only be provided by the amendments insofar as they are provisionally applied by the Contracting Parties. This, however, involves a constitutional problem for Austria as the Austrian Constitution does not provide for a provisional application of international agreements. We are thus unable to take part in the proposed decisions at the moment which however does not exclude:

- a) our participation in these measures once the amendments are ratified by Austria and enter into force, and
- b) pending the decision of the competent Austrian authorities voluntary contributions to the budget in the meantime.”

The Chairman adjourned the session at 10h20 to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement by the Director General of IUCN and the President of IWRB.

Establishment of a Standing Committee (continued)

The Chairman reopened the meeting at 11h00.

The observer from WWF-USA requested the floor. He expressed deep concern at the Resolution, considering that it failed to offer any incentive or attraction for developing countries. The Standing Committee might well have as few as three members from developing countries for as long as six years under the present proposal. He suggested that the second sentence of paragraph 2e) be deleted from the Annex, and urged the Parties to seek a more balanced composition.

The delegations of the United States and Italy and the observer from Botswana expressed their support for these views, the latter emphasizing the need to provide means of active participation in the running of the Convention to encourage acceptance by developing countries.

The Chairman then summarized matters still outstanding under Agenda item XIV, namely: budget, scale of contributions from Parties, financial regulations, draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters, draft resolution on provisional application of amendments, and the draft resolution for the establishment of a Standing Committee. He suggested that the Agenda be followed, but that administrative and financial matters be discussed separately by an ad hoc Technical Committee. By show of hands 15 delegations volunteered to compose such a group. The Chairman affirmed that the findings of the group would be reported to the plenary session for final discussion and decisions.

The Secretary-General announced that the Technical Committee would convene at 13h45.

Agenda item XV: Reports of the Working Groups

The Chairman invited the Assistant Secretary-General to introduce this item. The Assistant Secretary-General informed the Conference that the numbering of the reports reflected the order of the relevant sessions, and was not consistent with the alphabetical sequence of the workshops themselves. He explained that document C.3.15 had been prepared by the Secretariat to summarize the results of all four Working Groups.

Summary Report of Workshop B: Flyways and Reserve Networks

The Chairman invited Professor G.V.T. Matthews, Chairman of the workshop, to present the report. Professor Matthews summarized the contents of document W.G. C.3.1.

He informed the Conference that the background papers referred to were important and merited publication, preferably separately from the Conference proceedings. There was a possibility that Canada might help in this.

Questions in the ensuing discussion were directed at the Criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance. Use of a numerical index, such as presence of 10,000 or 20,000 waterfowl, was questioned by the delegations of Mauritania and Australia, while the observer from the Metis Association of North West Territories requested clarification of the concept of 'regular' use of wetland habitat. It was evident that the preparation of comprehensive guidelines for the application of these terms was essential.

Summary Report of Workshop A: Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance

The Chairman next invited presentation of the report from this workshop. In the absence of the workshop Chairman, this was presented by the Rapporteur, Mr. J-Y. Monval, who summarized the contents of document W.G. C.3.3.

The delegation of Mauritania, speaking as a representative of a developing country, regretted the exclusion of socio-economic considerations from the Criteria. He was concerned that opportunities could thereby be denied for designating important wetland areas in developing countries, where conditions and perceptions were different from those in developed countries. In conjunction with the delegations of Senegal, Mali, Tunisia, Norway, Finland and New Zealand he had prepared a note for submission to the Secretariat proposing the setting up of a working group to examine this matter.

The observer from Brazil expressed support for this initiative.

The Assistant Secretary-General undertook to discuss the matter with the interested parties and to report to the Conference in the afternoon session.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12h15.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Sixth Session: 2 June 1987, 13h50 17h15

Chairman: Mr. D. Sherratt

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

Rapporteurs: Mr. R. Osterwoldt, Mr. Z.J. Karpowicz, Ms. C. Pirrie

Agenda item XV: Reports of the Working Groups (continued)

The discussion of document W.G. C.3.3. continued at 13h50. In the light of the proposal from the delegation of Mauritania at the end of the morning session, the Assistant Secretary-

General suggested that a small working party convene on the evening of 2 June. This group could be composed of those delegations who had earlier expressed interest: Mauritania, Tunisia, Norway, Australia, and the two observers from the WWF. The delegation of Pakistan and the observer from Botswana also expressed interest in participating.

The delegation of Belgium expressed sympathy with the concerns of some of the developing countries to expand the criteria, but reiterated the view that the existing quantitative criteria, in particular the 1% reference, had in the past proved to be an effective instrument in effecting wetland conservation in developed countries.

The delegation of France expressed understanding for the concern of developing countries and agreed that Cagliari Criterion 3 should include some reference to socio-economic values. However, he remarked that, while the economic aspect was one indicator of a resource's importance, ecological value should serve as the fundamental consideration. He suggested that a working group could further define and clarify appropriate criteria.

The observer from Brazil did not believe that any developing country had considered that the biological/ecological consideration should not be fundamental; an expansion of the criteria to include social, cultural and economic factors would be helpful. The existing criteria appeared insufficient to motivate governments of developing countries to participate in the Ramsar Convention; the expense of implementing activities under the Ramsar Convention was not justified by referring to the species and numbers of waterfowl rather than socio-economic and cultural factors.

The delegation of Sweden noted the evident trend, especially among the developing countries, to expand the criteria and the evident desire of the majority of Contracting Parties to clarify the criteria through further guidelines as reflected in the Recommendation in paragraph 6 of page 4 of the summary report of Workshop A. The delegation of Australia concurred.

Summary Report of Workshop C: Wise Use of Wetlands

In the absence of the Chairman of this workshop, the report, document W.G. C.3.2, was presented by the workshop's Rapporteur, Dr. P.J. Dugan.

The participants of Workshop C had agreed on three recommendations to the Conference, as follows:

- i) Adoption of a modified definition of wise use, because the definition presented in document C.3.12, while succinct, was perceived to be too technical to be readily understandable by a broad audience.
- ii) Guidance on how to achieve wise use, through the elaboration of wetlands policies, should be provided to the Conference.
- iii) Guidance on priority action to be promoted by the Contracting Parties should be provided, and in particular on the immediate steps which they might take in order to effect and promote wise use before a full wetlands policy was elaborated and implemented.

On the first point, the English text of the definition of wise use presented in document W.G.

C.3.2, page 4, was amended to conform better with the French text, to read as follows:

“The wise use of wetlands is their sustainable utilization for the benefit of humankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem”.

The second sub-definition was perceived to be too technical and was amended to read as follows:

“Natural properties of the ecosystem are defined as “those physical, biological or chemical elements, such as soil, water, plants, animals, and nutrients and the interactions between them.”

Summary Report of Workshop D: the Ramsar Convention as a Vehicle for Linking Wetland Conservation and Development

The summary report was presented by the Chairman of the workshop, Dr. R. Schlatter, who expressed his thanks to the Rapporteur, Mr. J. van der Ven.

The workshop Chairman stated that the Conference had high expectations from this workshop's results because of the developing countries' interest in funds to assist wetland conservation and the developed countries' interest in how those funds could best be applied.

The participants had considered seven presentations. In the Annex to document W.G. C.3.4, they proposed a draft resolution on a statement to the multilateral and bilateral development assistance agencies concerning wetlands.

The example of Norway in providing bilateral aid to developing countries in the field of wetland conservation was praised.

The view was expressed that developing countries should be informed about the advantages to be gained by ratification of the Ramsar Convention, those advantages being diverse; some tangible, and some intangible which were not measurable in monetary terms alone.

While intermediary clearing houses such as UNEP provided some precedent for vehicles linking conservation and development, more alternative organizations were needed to channel funds to developing countries and offer expertise in evaluating and improving development plans.

The workshop Chairman noted that among obstacles to such linkage was the fact that in many developing countries there was no Ministry of the Environment and often environmental impact assessments were not undertaken for projects whose funding depended solely upon approval by the Ministry of Economy or Planning.

In conclusion, he stated that the Ramsar Convention should act as an instrument for improving the financing of wetland conservation.

The Chairman invited comments on the summary report of Workshop D. The delegation of Pakistan commended the report but added two points:

(i) There had been a consensus that IUCN should be entrusted with the role of acting as a

clearing house or vehicle of linkage.

(ii) The draft resolution might benefit from greater clarity and brevity.

The delegation of Sweden requested clarification of item 6, in paragraph 7, on page 2 of the draft resolution: “(6) to maximize productivity outside wetlands.” The observer from Venezuela clarified item 6, as reflecting a trend in developing countries to plan agriculture, for example to plant grain crops so as not to encroach on wetlands. Therefore, productive agricultural activities should be concentrated outside wetlands.

The observer from Botswana corrected the reference to his contribution to the workshop which was entitled “Wetland Conservation and Development in Botswana” (document INF. C.3.22).

The Assistant Secretary-General presented document C.3.15, prepared by the Secretariat to assist the Conference by collating the four draft recommendations from each of the workshops. The Secretariat had added preambles to the draft recommendations 3.1. on criteria; 3.2. on flyways and reserve networks; 3.3. on wise use; and 3.4. on the Convention as a vehicle for linking wetland conservation and development.

The delegation of Australia noted an apparent inconsistency between the summary report of Workshop A and the Annex to draft recommendation 3.1. It had understood that the old Cagliari Criterion 3 would be retained and the items currently labeled as “Criterion 1” in the Annex would simply be “guidelines”. For comparison, paragraph 5 on page 4 of document W.G. C.3.3 was referred to: “the existing Cagliari criterion 3 would benefit from detailed guidelines . . .”. The Assistant Secretary-General promised to clarify this point with the workshop participants.

The second point raised by the delegation of Australia was its understanding that numerical references would be retained in the criteria. It suggested that the preambular wording on page 2 of document C.3.15 be replaced by more clear and concise wording.

The delegation of Greece commented with reference to document W.G. C.3.2 that the wise use of wetlands could not be achieved with restrictive legal measures, unless a study and a master plan of human activities in the area had been elaborated. Greece was trying to work out solutions for a balance between man and his environment before setting a strong legal frame. With reference to document W.G. C.3.4 it noted that an essential condition for wetland conservation was execution of studies to ensure ecological balance against past negative impacts. Infrastructural works which supported compatible land and water uses were effective for management of wetlands.

The Chairman invited delegates to submit textual changes to the draft recommendations to the Secretariat and thanked the workshop Chairmen and participants.

Agenda item XVI: Review of National Reports and Convention Implementation

The Assistant Secretary-General introduced document C.3.6 - Review of National Reports submitted by Contracting Parties and Review of Implementation of the Convention since the second meeting in Groningen, the Netherlands in May 1984.

The national reports reflected the two main undertakings by Contracting Parties under the Ramsar Convention:

- i) to list sites of wetlands of international importance, and
- ii) to make wise use of wetlands.

The Assistant Secretary-General noted that, as reported at Groningen, no listed site had been deleted. There had been some deletions of parts of sites and some sites might undergo considerable changes of their ecological character in the near future.

While the listing of wetland sites had been the main focus in reports, the Contracting Parties had displayed an increasing tendency to give greater importance to the wise use of wetlands.

In the preparation of document C.3.6₁ three main sources had been relied upon:

- i) the national reports themselves,
- ii) other information sent by the Contracting Parties to the Bureau,
- iii) information submitted to IUCN and IWRB from a variety of other sources which was often checked with the Contracting Parties and then incorporated in the report.

The Secretariat had circulated a Notification requesting the submission of national reports by six months before the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, but by 27 November 1986 only one Contracting Party had submitted its national report. A further 17 Contracting Parties had submitted by mid-March and 16 national reports had been received in the weeks prior to the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Those Contracting Parties which had submitted their national reports by mid-March 1987 when the overview was prepared were the following: Algeria, Australia, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Uruguay.

More recently, after the overview report had been drafted, reports from the following Contracting Parties had been received: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Iceland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, and the United States of America.

In all 34 national reports from Contracting Parties had been received. They formed the most extensive body of data on implementation of the Convention and would be reproduced in the Proceedings of the Conference.

The delegation of Sweden congratulated the Bureau for its work in summarizing national reports and called upon all Contracting Parties to meet future deadlines as recommended. The Conference supported the suggestion of the Assistant Secretary-General, endorsed by the delegation of the Netherlands, that the 16 national reports recently received should also be summarized and included in a revised review of national reports.

It was suggested that some developing countries might benefit from assistance from other

Contracting Parties to gather information and to produce their national reports.

The Assistant Secretary-General proceeded to present document C.3.6 section by section, organized by subject areas rather than by individual countries.

While there had been 35 Contracting Parties at the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Groningen in 1984, there were 44 at this Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Regina. The Assistant Secretary-General said he understood that the formalities of becoming a Contracting Party had also been completed by Mali.

The delegation of Mali informed the Conference that Mali had sent its instrument of ratification to Unesco, the Depository, and had designated three sites in the Inner Delta of the Niger floodplains, comprising 2 to 3.5 million hectares of productive land which flooded each year and provided a subsistence living for hundreds of thousands of people. The three sites had been chosen so as not to affect the people's lifestyles and to conserve natural resources there for the benefit of the people. The Government of Mali had recently developed a management plan for the whole area.

The Assistant Secretary-General noted that since the Groningen Conference, several States in the Western Hemisphere had become Contracting Parties. The observer from Venezuela stated that after several studies, the Government had chosen an 8000 hectares area on the north coast, including lagoons which were important for at least 86 species of fish. While several formal stages including the enactment of domestic legislation still needed completion, he hoped that his Government would soon be able to accede to the Convention.

The observers from Guatemala and Peru also expressed the intention of their Governments to accede to the Convention in the near future.

After a coffee break, the Chairman re-opened the session at 16h05 and invited the Assistant Secretary-General to continue with the presentation of document C.3.6, and in particular the possibility of further States from the Western Hemisphere becoming Contracting Parties.

The observer from Bolivia expressed the hope that Bolivia would become a Contracting Party and having briefly informed the Conference of the threats to the wetland of Laguna Colorada offered to present a report on these threats to the Conference on 3 June 1987.

The delegation of Chile suggested that it would be useful if the Conference made a recommendation encouraging countries to become Contracting Parties to the Convention as soon as possible.

The delegation of Uruguay stated that an extensive report on its Ramsar site, the Bañados del Este y Franja Costera, had been submitted and that the information in this document had been extensively used in document C.3.6.

The Assistant Secretary-General invited comments from the delegates on the situation in Asia.

The delegation of Pakistan noted that, in addition to India, Japan, Pakistan and USSR, Asian Contracting Parties included the Islamic Republic of Iran and Jordan.

The delegation of Jordan listed the threats to the Ramsar site, Azraq Oasis:

- i) the annual extraction by the Jordanian water authorities of 16 million cubic metres of drinking water for the inhabitants of Amman had resulted in a critical situation in the fresh-salt water balance of the Azraq Oasis with the consequent threat to both the Ramsar site and the population of the capital.
- ii) a dam built in Syria had reduced the inflow of water into the catchment area of the oasis.
- iii) a prolonged drought.

He suggested that the Conference should appeal to the Jordanian water authorities to reduce the level of extraction of water from the Ramsar site.

The observer from Malaysia stated that, following the hosting by his country of the Malacca regional wetland meeting, the meeting of the Nature Conservation Group of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) had endorsed the suggestion that countries become Contracting Parties to the Convention. However, the ASEAN Expert Group on the Environment had expressed the need for more information before committing countries to the Convention. A one-year wetland inventory project had been completed (largely as a result of good records being freely available from the Departments of Wildlife, of Forestry and of Fisheries) and would be published later this year or early next. The observer pointed out that Malaysia was a developing country whose economy was based on agricultural production and that land areas needed to be brought into development and housing. Despite this, forests covered between 49% and 70% of the country and 5% of Peninsular Malaysia was protected in one form or another and 2000 square miles declared as ASEAN Heritage sites and reserves.

The observer from Indonesia reported that a draft wetland inventory had been presented at the Malacca meeting and that, of the 10% of the country set aside for conservation, some 3.5 million hectares were wetlands. The Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Environment in Indonesia were hopeful that the Ramsar Convention would be tabled as an agenda item at the ASEAN meeting of Environment Ministers scheduled to take place in Indonesia in August 1987.

The observer from the Philippines stated that the Forest Research Institute was currently preparing a proposal to the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources that the Philippines become a Contracting Party in the near future.

The observer from Thailand reported that Thailand had participated in the ASEAN meeting and that wetland areas were already protected in the country's existing protected areas system. Information obtained from the present conference would help speed up Thailand's accession to the Ramsar Convention.

The observer from Sri Lanka reported that a wetland inventory had been prepared. The country had participated in the Malacca meeting and had also organized four workshops and symposia on the subject of wetlands. The observer stated that of 347 important wetlands (of four main types) listed in his country, 132 were protected areas, most having been gazetted back in 1938. The Department of Wildlife Conservation was continuing to promote the idea of Sri Lanka becoming a Contracting Party.

In referring to document C.3.6, paragraph 14, the Assistant Secretary-General invited comments on the possibility of further African States joining the Convention.

The observer from Kenya stated that Kenya was definitely considering accession to the Ramsar Convention in due course, but pointed out that Kenya was already conserving most of its nature conservation sites including many wetlands such as mangrove forests, inland lakes and forests and their associated fauna.

The observer from Zambia reported that Zambia could not fail to take the necessary steps to accede to the Ramsar Convention and that the responsibility of Zambia to protect and conserve wetlands was in line with the World Conservation Strategy. The observer pointed out that:

- i) the Ramsar Convention was regarded as the correct convention for wetland conservation;
- ii) a National Conservation Strategy had been prepared which included wetlands;
- iii) two important wetlands - Bangweulu and Kafue flats - were included in sustainable development projects agreed between Zambia and the United Kingdom.

The observer from Chad thanked IUCN, IWRB, and the French Ministry of Environment for their assistance in making possible his attendance at the present Meeting of the Conference. The observer stated that efforts had been made since 1984 to accede to the Convention. As a result of funding from the French Ministry of the Environment, inventories of the wetlands and waterfowl in Chad had been completed and two areas, which met the criteria for Ramsar sites, Lake Chad and Lake Fitri, had been identified. The Lake Chad Basin Commission included the four countries which shared Lake Chad - Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon - and the observer expressed the hope that all four would join the Convention. Lake Fitri could be declared a Ramsar site and a biosphere reserve. The Chad Minister of Tourism and Environment had hoped to attend the Conference in person, and had stated that by the end of the year Chad would become a Contracting Party. A letter to this effect would be sent to the Convention Bureau and to Unesco. The observer from Chad felt that the application of socio-economic criteria were very important and needed to be taken into account, as well as cooperation with other countries such as Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria.

The observer from Ghana stated that preparations for Ghana's accession to both the Bonn and Ramsar Conventions had started some two years ago following cooperation with the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). Two major stages in the process of accession had been passed with the acceptance of the proposals by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Committee of Secretaries. The proposals had been sent on 26 May 1987 to the Provisional National Defence Council for final approval and signature. Although the outcome of this meeting was not known the observer believed that Ghana would very soon become a Contracting Party.

The observer from Botswana stated that, although not yet a Contracting Party, Botswana supported the general principles of the Convention and that accession was only a matter of time. The observer stated that there was a need to analyze the benefits to his country of becoming a Contracting Party and to ensure that wetlands would remain available for continuous sustainable utilization as well as for conservation. Botswana intended to maintain

a dialogue with IUCN and the Convention Bureau to overcome problem areas and stressed that, by investigating and understanding the problems faced by developing countries, the Bureau secretariat would be better able to assist in the accession of non-member countries. Finally the observer mentioned that a paper on Botswana wetlands had been delivered to the Bureau. The Assistant Secretary-General acknowledged receipt of this document, and promised that it and the texts of other statements by observers would be considered for inclusion in the Proceedings of the Conference.

In referring to document C.3.6, paragraph 15, the Assistant Secretary-General concluded that no new Contracting Parties are known or anticipated from the Oceania region.

In reviewing document C.3.6, paragraphs 16 to 21, the Assistant Secretary-General stressed the need felt by the organizers of the Regina Conference to assist the participation of delegates from developing countries in Conferences of the Contracting Parties. He reminded delegates that Workshops C and D - Wise use of wetlands and the use of the Ramsar Convention as a vehicle for linking wetland conservation and development - had addressed the question of why the Convention was important for developing countries. Reasons for joining the Convention, identified at the recent Malacca meeting, were outlined in paragraph 20. He suggested the use of Recommendation 1.1 of the Cagliari Conference, putting forward the idea that existing Contracting Parties might use their good offices with non-Party States in their own region, as a mechanism for attracting further Contracting Parties.

Next the Assistant Secretary-General reviewed document C.3.6 paragraphs 22 to 26 and invited delegates to comment or update the information contained therein on the current Contracting Parties to the Paris protocol.

The delegation of Italy stated that the Paris Protocol had been ratified in February 1987 and published on 15 May 1987 in the Italian Official Journal.

The delegation of Spain stated that Spain had submitted its instrument of ratification of the Protocol to Unesco on 27 May 1987.

The delegation of Suriname stated that, although Suriname had not yet ratified the Paris Protocol, steps were being taken to submit the instrument of ratification as soon as possible.

The delegation of Mauritania stated that the Paris Protocol had been ratified by the Supreme Council on 12 May 1987 and that the instrument of ratification would be submitted to Unesco.

The Assistant Secretary-General made a point of clarification, stating that an instrument of ratification must be submitted to Unesco before a State could become a Contracting Party to the Protocol.

The delegation of Belgium stated that Belgium would probably be signing the Paris Protocol in the current year.

The delegation of Austria stated that ratification of the Paris Protocol was still under consideration.

The delegation of Greece stated that the Paris Protocol had been submitted for ratification as

a high priority with the Greek Parliament and a result was expected either in the present week or the following one.

The Assistant Secretary-General noted that nearly all Contracting Parties which were Parties to the Convention prior to the entry into force of the Paris Protocol had now ratified the Paris Protocol. Those States becoming Contracting Parties after 1 October 1986 would not need to join the Protocol separately, since they would join the Convention as amended by the Protocol.

In reviewing paragraphs 27 and 28 the Assistant Secretary-General drew the attention of the delegates to document INF. C.3.10 and requested that Contracting Parties provide additions and corrections to this document on national authorities responsible for implementation of the Convention and, wherever possible, to provide telephone and telex numbers.

With reference to paragraphs 29 to 32, the Assistant Secretary-General pointed out that the "List of Wetlands of International Importance" included only wetlands designated for the list and that there were many unlisted wetlands which nevertheless were internationally important. He noted that further wetlands had been designated by Niger, the Netherlands (Oosterschelde), Denmark (Waddensea), Canada (eleven new sites, during the present Conference) and, he understood, Mali (three sites). This would bring the total to 374 sites covering over 22 million hectares.

Under discussion of voluntary contributions towards the cost of the interim secretariat, the delegation of Greece noted that a contribution had been made by Greece, though this was not mentioned in document C.3.6 paragraph 34. The Assistant Secretary-General promised to investigate this matter.

Turning to discussion of additional sites designated for the List by Contracting Parties, the Assistant Secretary-General noted that in addition to the 14 Contracting Parties mentioned in document C.3.6 paragraph 40, Denmark and South Africa had added further sites, while in its national report the USA had mentioned its intention of so doing.

Referring to document C.3.6 paragraph 42 the Assistant Secretary-General recalled Article 2.1 of the Convention which specified that boundaries of wetlands designated for the List needed to be precisely defined and mapped. Greek Ramsar sites had not been precisely mapped and this caused difficulty in determining the status of the wetlands designated for the List by Greece.

The delegation of Greece indicated that the national report dated 16 March 1987, submitted to the Convention Bureau by the Greek Ministry of the Environment, should not be considered as final. The same Ministry was currently carrying out procedures for the definition of boundaries and management plans in the listed wetland sites, and was elaborating studies on the present status of the wetlands. The delegation indicated that an updated report based on these studies would be submitted to the Convention Bureau before the end of 1987, and requested that this document be included in the Proceedings of the Regina Conference as the Greek national report. The Chairman agreed to this request.

The Assistant Secretary-General, with reference to document C.3.6 paragraphs 43 and 44, repeated that no Contracting Party had deleted a wetland from the List.

The delegation of Pakistan drew the attention of the Conference to paragraph 47 which correctly reflected the situation in Pakistan. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that Kaman marshes, a part of Lake Nears, and Yadegarlu marshes in the southern part of the Oroomiyeh Lake had both been removed from the List of designated wetlands due to prolonged drought conditions and war damage. They had been replaced by the Cheghakur and Gandoman wetlands thus bringing the number of wetlands designated in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the List to 19. The area of the wetlands sites of Miankaleh and the Shadegan Marshes had not been decreased although some 20% to 30% of the latter area was affected by war damage.

The delegation of Belgium pointed out that the figure given in paragraph 38 was incorrect and gave 5790 hectares as the true figure.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 17h15.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Seventh Session: 3 June 1987, 09h30 - 12h15

Chairman: Mr. V. Koester

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference)

Rapporteurs: Mr. A. J. Mence, Mr. R. Osterwoldt

Agenda item XIV: Institutional Arrangements (continued)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 09h30 and requested the Secretary-General to introduce revised documents prepared by the ad hoc Technical Committee which had worked late on 2 June 1987 to enable consideration of their findings by the Conference.

The revised documents presented were as follows:

- document C.3.8. (Rev.) on financial and budgetary matters with a revised budget for 1988 - 1990 as Attachment 1 (Rev.)
- the scale of contributions as Attachment 2 (Rev.)
- the terms of reference as Attachment 3 (Rev.)
- the draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters as the Annex
- document C.3.9. (Rev.) on the establishment of a Standing Committee
- a draft concerning provisional implementation of the amendments to the Convention submitted by the members of the Task Force (Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Poland, Senegal, Tunisia) and by Pakistan.

Budget

The Chairman reminded the Contracting Parties that the Plenary Session had already discussed the budget and that the Technical Committee had taken account of that in their detailed discussion of each budget item. Only two changes had been made, namely:

- Item 8, Support to Delegates for Meeting Participation. had been increased by \$5,000 to \$25,000 per year.

- Item 10, Contingency Fund, had been reduced by \$5,000 per year.

The delegation from Suriname corrected the amended wording in item 8 to read “participation by delegations from developing countries notably from Contracting Parties...”

The Chairman then referred to the problem of whether the budget should be expressed in Swiss francs (SFr) or United States dollars (US\$). The Technical Committee had recommended retaining reference, in document C.3.8 (Rev.) Attachment 2, to US\$ but recognized that exchange rate fluctuations might cause difficulties. To minimize these the Committee had recommended the following:

- In order to ensure that the amount of each contribution would retain its present dollar value it was suggested to fix the US\$ to an exchange rate with the Swiss franc of US\$1 = SFr 1.5214 as on 3 June 1987.

- Because the value of the US\$ had fallen from a rate of SFr. 1.70 at the time when the budget was drafted in December 1986, there was already a shortfall of approximately 80,000 SFr per year. Therefore it was suggested that the Contracting Parties be requested to pay on a voluntary basis an extra amount to cover the shortfall. Invoices issued by the Bureau to the Contracting Parties would include a reference to the extra amounts necessary to make good the shortfall and an invitation to make voluntary payments accordingly.

The Chairman suggested that a footnote to the budget should be added to the effect that:

- the budget was to be based on the present rate of exchange between the US dollar and the Swiss franc;

- the Conference was to request the Contracting Parties to make voluntary extra payments to make up any resulting shortfalls in income;

- the Standing Committee was to be given the mandate by the Conference to make necessary adjustments between budget lines to increase particular items dependent upon Swiss franc expenditure.

The Secretary-General presented a suggested wording for the text of such footnote to the budget, as follows:

“Footnote: This budget has been presented in the currency of United States dollars with an applicable exchange rate of US\$1 = Sfr.1.5214. On the basis of this exchange rate a Swiss franc version of this budget will be used for the triennium 1988-90. Because of the fluctuation in the exchange rate between the time when the budget was drafted in December 1986 and the time of its adoption at the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties there has been a shortfall. The Conference of the Contracting Parties recommends that the Contracting Parties pay on a voluntary basis any shortfalls due to this situation which will be identified by the Bureau at the time of invoicing and will be stated on the invoice.

The Standing Committee is empowered to make necessary adjustments between budget lines to accommodate requirements in expenditure related to this shortfall.”

The Chairman affirmed that there was no intention of imposing an obligation on any Contracting Party to pay more than the amount specified in the budget.

The budget with the footnote was adopted by consensus.

The delegation of France asked it to be recorded that, while not wishing to block the consensus, it did not consider the measures adopted to be the most appropriate and would have preferred the budget to be expressed in Swiss francs as from the time of this meeting. It considered the system adopted to be excessively complicated.

Scale of Contributions

The Secretary-General drew attention to errors in Attachment 2 (Rev.) to document C.3.8 as follows:

- p. 1; the 1988-90 share payable by the Federal Republic of Germany should be US\$ 108,378.

- p. 3; in the second line of the paragraph identified by three asterisks, the words “other contributions” should be within quotation marks.

The Chairman explained that the Technical Committee had addressed the difficulty which had arisen in Plenary Session concerning one delegation’s position, and a new initiative had been discussed.

The delegation of the United States indicated that the difficulty had been resolved.

The scale of contributions laid down in Attachment 2 (Rev.) to document C.3.8 was adopted by consensus of the Parties with no objection.

The delegation of Austria stated that its country had no desire to block consensus concerning the financial and institutional arrangements, but must refer to its earlier comments that for constitutional reasons Austria was unable to accept the relevant decisions proposed by this Conference.

The delegation of Uruguay stated that, although it had subscribed to the consensus, it did not have the credentials to represent government policy.

The Chairman informed the delegation of Uruguay that the Credentials Committee would take care of that point in its report.

Terms of Reference for Financial Administration

The Chairman presented document C.3.8. (Rev.) Attachment 3, which he remarked had received few comments and no substantial objection during the previous Plenary Session and in the Technical Committee. The Conference adopted the Terms of Reference as presented by consensus.

Draft Resolution on Financial and Budgetary Matters

The Chairman presented the draft resolution set out in the Annex to document C.3.8 (Rev. 1), saying that some editorial amendments had been suggested in Plenary Session but no disagreements had been expressed. The Technical Committee found no difficulties with the text.

The delegation of Switzerland suggested that the following words be inserted between existing operative paragraphs 5 and 6:

“URGES all Contracting Parties to make voluntary payments to cover deficiencies in the budget caused by changes in the value of the United States dollar”.

The delegation of Australia suggested that the words “in 1988” be deleted from operative paragraph 5.

The delegation of Pakistan suggested that the words “which have not yet done so” be deleted from operative paragraph 6.

The Conference adopted by consensus the Resolution with the three amendments suggested above.

The delegation of Japan advised that, for purely internal procedural reasons, amendments adopted at the Extraordinary Conference would take some time to be accepted and therefore it was not in a position to say when Japan could pay its contribution.

The delegation of the Netherlands requested clarification from the delegation of the United States on what action would be taken to encourage the United States to make voluntary contributions.

The delegation of the United States assured the Conference that it would make great efforts to secure payment of the voluntary contributions recommended by the Conference.

The observer for the WWF-USA, speaking on behalf of non-governmental organizations in the United States, expressed appreciation that the Parties were striving to resolve the budgetary problems. He assured the Conference that the non-governmental organizations would do their utmost to get the United States Congress to approve a substantial voluntary contribution. He stated that the non-governmental organizations intended also to contribute to the budget of the Convention. He informed the Conference that World Wildlife Fund-USA was committed to contribute \$10,000 in 1988 and would contribute \$20,000 in 1987 if other organizations would match that figure on a 2 to 1 basis.

The observer for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) informed the Conference that RSPB would also make a voluntary contribution to the budget, notably for item 8 to assist the attendance from developing countries at meetings of the Conference.

The Chairman expressed appreciation to WWF-USA and the RSPB for their generous offer of contributions.

Provisional Implementation of Amendments to the Convention

The Chairman referred to the draft document on Provisional Implementation of the Amendments to the Convention. He recalled that this was based on a suggestion from the delegation of Canada at the first session of the Extraordinary Conference. The Technical Committee had drafted it in consideration of comments made in the Plenary Session by, amongst others, the delegations of Australia and Switzerland.

The delegation of Switzerland suggested that in the third line of the second preambular paragraph the word “apply” be substituted by the word “implement”.

The draft, amended as suggested by Switzerland, was adopted as a Resolution by consensus.

The delegation of Austria explained that Austria would enter a reservation to this resolution because constitutional procedures in Austria did not allow provisional application of international agreements.

Establishment of a Standing Committee

The Chairman referred to document C.3.9 (Rev.) and requested comments.

The delegation of France asked that the French version of the text of paragraph 2(e) of the Annex be corrected to reflect the English version, which stated that “Members may serve on the Committee for a maximum of two consecutive terms”.

Considerable discussion was devoted to the number of seats on the Standing Committee. The delegation of Tunisia recommended that the Committee be increased in size from nine to ten members by adding one additional seat for developing country representation.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany expressed the view that it was unwise to assume that one Contracting Party from each geographical region would be representative of the whole region, since countries within regions did not necessarily share similar problems, interests, traditions, and political systems.

The delegation from South Africa suggested that, under the present wording in paragraph 2(a) “not more than nine”, there could be less than nine members of the Standing Committee in which case all regions might not be represented anyway.

The Chairman concluded that additional discussion was required on the provisions of paragraph 2(a) and that these should take place in the Technical Committee. Meanwhile subparagraphs (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) in paragraph 2 of the Annex to document C.3.9 (Rev.) could be considered. These were approved by consensus.

The Chairman expressed the hope that the entire draft Resolution as amended could be adopted by the Conference at the relevant session. He then called for a meeting of the Technical Committee during the lunch break and closed the meeting at 12h15.

SUMMARY REPORT OF PLENARY SESSION

Eighth Session: 3 June 1987, 14h00 - 17h30

Chairman: Mr. V. Koester (14h00 - 14h20), Mr. D. Sherratt
Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference), Mr. M. Smart (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference)
Rapporteurs: Mr. Z. Karpowicz Mr. R. Osterwoldt Ms. C. Pirrie

Agenda item XIV: Institutional Arrangements (continued)

The Chairman opened the session at 14h00 and referred to document C.3.9 (Rev. 1). He reported that the Technical Committee had advised that the question of geographical representation might be clarified by the addition of a footnote to define “geographical distribution” in the last line of paragraph 2(a) of the Annex to the draft Resolution, as follows:

“‘geographical distribution’ reflects the following seven regions listed at the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties as Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Northern America, Oceania, Southern America, and Western Europe. This listing is not to be regarded as rigid but to give an indication of a proper geographical distribution which could change at a future meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties as is deemed appropriate.”

In addition, the Chairman reported that, with regard to the number of Contracting Parties comprising the Standing Committee, the Technical Committee had recommended that the present proposal of nine be retained. He advised the Conference to accept this compromise proposal and it was decided by consensus to adopt the draft Resolution with the footnote presented above.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran requested that a reservation regarding geographical representation be recorded. It considered that representation on the Standing Committee should reflect that Asia was the biggest continent.

The Chairman of the Conference having returned to the Conference, he thanked the Vice-Chairman for having steered the Conference through the difficult stages of documents C.3.7, C.3.8 and C.3.9. He then presented the summary reports of the two preceding plenary sessions, documents PLEN. C.3.3 and PLEN. C.3.4.

The delegation of Switzerland queried the figure of 27 credentials reported under Agenda item XII: Report of the Credentials Committee. The Secretary-General agreed to check this figure with the Chairman of the Credentials Committee and pointed out that the figure referred only to the ordinary Conference.

Subject to the foregoing check on the figure for credentials, document PLEN. C.3.3 was adopted.

The delegation of Switzerland pointed out that in the circulated version of document PLEN. C.3.4, the number of the session, the date and the time of opening and closing of the session were missing.

The delegation of Greece stated that it had delivered a written submission to the Secretariat to be added to the last paragraph on page 3 of document PLEN. C.3.4 and was anxious to see this submission incorporated in the Summary Report. The Secretary-General apologized to the delegation of Greece and promised that the additions would be incorporated.

Subject to the foregoing additions, document PLEN. C.3.4 was adopted.

The delegation of Switzerland noted that little time was available for delegates to review the summary reports of the Plenary Sessions and requested that these reports be provided the day immediately following the session.

The Secretary-General agreed that this would be ideal and that the Secretariat had been striving to achieve this state of affairs. He stated the Secretariat's intention to have remaining summary reports of the Plenary Sessions provided in this way, should circumstances allow.

Agenda item XVI: Review of National Reports and Convention Implementation (continued)

The Chairman invited the Assistant Secretary-General to continue with the presentation of document C.3.6. Before proceeding to the review of the section dealing with changes in legal status, degree of protection or ownership of listed wetlands, the Assistant Secretary-General read to the Conference a telex received from IUCN headquarters concerning the notification by Ireland of three new wetlands for the Ramsar List - Owenboy Nature Reserve, Knockmoyle / Sheskin Nature Reserve, and Lough Barra Bog, which would bring the total on the Ramsar List to 377 sites.

The Assistant Secretary-General continued by stating that paragraphs 52 to 54 illustrated the flexibility of approach used by Contracting Parties in designating wetlands to the Ramsar List, and proceeded to present the national statements appearing in paragraphs 55 to 65. Referring to paragraph 60 dealing with the Federal Republic of Germany he informed the Conference that the Ramsar sites located in Lower Saxony had been incorporated into a national park. In Spain 15,000 hectares of the Doñana National Park had been purchased and were now in the ownership of the national park authorities.

The observer from the World Wide Fund for Nature-International (WWF-Int.) stated that his organization, together with other non-governmental conservation organizations, was very concerned with the listing policies utilized by Contracting Parties. Some Contracting Parties listed only wetlands already protected, whilst other Contracting Parties listed sites irrespective of whether they had protective status and then used the Convention to provide protection. He considered that those Contracting Parties which only listed existing protected sites were not using the Convention to its full potential and were missing an opportunity to extend protective status to internationally important, but unprotected, wetlands.

The delegation of Finland stated that, at times, a country had to make a choice in the use of limited resources and in the case of Finland the emphasis had been placed on formulating an overall wetlands policy, rather than listing many sites.

The Assistant Secretary-General next presented the section dealing with changes in the ecological character of listed wetlands detailed in paragraphs 66 to 107. He noted that since the Groningen Conference the Bureau had received notifications pursuant to Article 3.2 from three Contracting Parties: Austria, Federal Republic of Germany and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and noted that, in addition to information contained in paragraphs 70 to 72, further information had been presented in the national reports submitted by these Contracting Parties.

The delegation of Austria informed the Conference of the history of the problem at the

Donau-March-Auen site and of the latest situation. It stated that the Austrian Federal Government had charged a Government Commission with the task of elaborating alternatives for hydro-electric exploitation of the Danube east of Vienna. A report was expected at the end of June 1987 and in addition the Federal Ministry for Environmental Protection had funded a private association of ecologists to help plan a national park in the Donau-March-Thaya-Auen.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran commended the Bureau on the preparation of document C.3.6 and added that a full report on the status of the wetlands in its country had been delivered to the Bureau. It then outlined its country's environmental protection policies, reminding the Conference that the Islamic Republic of Iran had hosted the first international conference on wetlands and waterfowl at Ramsar in January 1971 and was one of the founders of the Convention. The delegation remarked that the Islamic Republic of Iran faced exceptional conservation problems for certain of its wetlands and pointed out the drastic reduction of the water level experienced at the Hamoun-e-Saberi and Hamoun-e-Puzak Ramsar sites, resulting in their virtual disappearance in 1985. It explained that the reason for this was the construction of two dams in Afghanistan on the river supplying the lake with water. The delegation referred to Article 5 of the Convention which required that Contracting Parties consult with each other in the case of wetlands or water systems shared by Contracting Parties. While acknowledging that Afghanistan was not a Contracting Party, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran requested that the Bureau take all possible action to promote the restoration of the ecological balance of the lake.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran then drew the attention of the delegates to the destruction of the two listed wetlands of Shadegan marshes and tidal mudflats of Khor al Amaya and Khor Musa in Southwestern Iran which it attributed to the use of chemical weapons and the continuing war in the region. In addition it informed the Conference of the destruction of an unlisted wetland (Zarivar lake) in Kurdistan, again attributing the damage to the use of chemical weapons. It asked that this unprecedented destruction of wetlands in Iran be noted by the Conference.

The Assistant Secretary-General noted the reported threats to the Galgenschoor wetland in Belgium.

The delegation of Belgium read out a statement providing further information on the situation at the Lower Scheldt river site between Antwerp and the Dutch border. Of the three separate parts of this Ramsar site, one, the Galgenschoor, was to be reduced in size by the loss of 30 hectares of tidal mudflat as a result of the further expansion of the Antwerp harbour facilities. In spite of the fact that the site was listed as late as March 1986 the Ministry of Public Works had already negotiated changes to the national legislation which protected the site. In compensation the Institute of Nature Conservation of the Ministry of the Flemish Community had been asked to nominate an alternative site for the Ramsar List. No similar habitat type sites existed for alternative designation and therefore on 27 May 1987 2,000 hectares of wet grassland habitat along the river Yzer had been designated for the Ramsar List. The delegation of Belgium stated, however, that it thought that this was a dangerous precedent but nevertheless illustrated the strength of the Convention.

The delegation of Pakistan stated that the ecological character of two wetlands in Pakistan had changed and that details had been given in the country's national report.

The observer of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) stated that the information contained in document C.3.6 led to the conclusion that serious deficiencies existed in the implementation of the Convention and drew the attention of the delegates to the final resolution of the EEB/IUCN seminar, which was presented in document INF. C.3.23, and to the statement by the non-governmental organizations attending the present Conference which had been distributed to all participants. Regarding the decision of the Belgian authorities to construct a container terminal in the Galgenschuur sector of the Ramsar site he emphasized the danger of other Contracting Parties adopting a policy by which compensation and substitution of one site for another would be used as an excuse for delisting existing sites. He urged the Conference to consider that prompt action be taken to prevent further degradation to listed sites and emphasized the need for the restoration of sites already degraded.

Turning to the discussion of the remaining paragraphs in this section, the Assistant Secretary-General noted that the degree of detail provided by Contracting Parties in their national reports varied greatly. In some cases, information was not provided about particular wetlands of concern. Referring to paragraph 82 he noted that the report of the Federal Republic of Germany did not mention the Leybucht, where problems had been reported in previous reviews. The information in paragraphs 85 to 87 had been compiled prior to the receipt of the Greek national report and contained references to severe problems existing at a number, if not all, of the Ramsar sites in Greece. The Assistant Secretary-General referred to paragraphs 94 and 95 and paragraph 97 (which had been compiled prior to the submission of the Spanish National Report) in which it was noted that the Daimiel National Park was in a critical state due to heavy exploitation of the aquifer feeding the site, whilst a more reassuring situation now existed in Doñana National Park. Considerable details were provided in paragraphs 101 to 105 on the situation in the United Kingdom indicating that the most serious threats concerned the Dee Estuary and the Lough Neagh sites.

Paragraphs 106 and 107 were, said the Assistant Secretary-General, an attempt to summarize the threats posed to Ramsar sites classified into several groups, the most important of which were:

- sites in developing countries threatened by projects affecting their water supplies, and
- sites in developed countries threatened by industrial construction projects.

Paragraph 107 presented a listing by Contracting Party countries, of the sites most seriously threatened.

The delegation of Spain noted that the reports presented in document C.3.6 concerning Spain had not been provided by the national authorities and enquired as to the source of this information.

In answering this question the Secretary-General stated that national reports were used as the basis for the Review but that due to the limited time available for preparation of document C.3.6 a deadline had been set, by which time only 18 national reports had been received. The Review had therefore as in the past incorporated information from other sources. An in-depth review would be possible with improved communication channels between Contracting Parties and the Bureau. The Assistant Secretary-General then drew the attention of the Conference to paragraph 5 of document C.3.6 which detailed the three main sources utilized in the preparation of the Review; he added that the source of individual information items

was indicated in most paragraphs.

The delegation of Spain considered that a document entitled “Survey of national reports submitted by Contracting Parties and Review of Implementation of the Convention since the Second Meeting in Groningen” should not include information other than that officially submitted by the Contracting Party concerned. Since the Spanish national report had not been submitted, information from other sources should not have been used. It considered that threats to wetlands in Spain represented one of the most serious conservation problems for the country, and new problems were appearing. In this context, it stressed the role that the Bureau had to play in providing scientific and technical assistance to Contracting Parties

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany commended the Bureau on an excellent summary review and urged all Contracting Parties to transmit information to the Bureau in a timely manner. Referring to the Leybucht site it informed the Conference that the plans for the construction of a dyke had been withdrawn and the new proposals concerning the area inland of the Ramsar site would have an unknown, but possibly even a positive, impact on the Leybucht area. The proposal to construct a new harbour in the Dollart had been negotiated with the Dutch Government and, although contested by conservation organizations, the project had popular support since it was seen as a solution to the area’s high unemployment level (the highest in the country). A decision on the project was still pending, with investigations being held on the possibility of siting the harbour elsewhere. In addition, the capital necessary for the construction had not been made available.

Twelve other sites were mentioned but one, the Lower Rhine, detailed in paragraph 84, second sub-paragraph, illustrated the usefulness of Ramsar listing for the protection of a site. There the original threat to hundreds of hectares had been reduced to just nine hectares.

The delegation of the United Kingdom referred to the situation at the Lough Neagh site and stated that information had now become available and would be submitted in a written report.

The delegation of Greece stated that it did not share the concern and opinions expressed in relation to Greek Ramsar sites in paragraphs 42, 85, 86 and 87 of document C.3.6. Greece had not withdrawn any of its original eleven sites from the Ramsar List, nor had it reduced the area listed. This was an indication of Greece’s intention to protect the sites and implement the Convention. Since the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Groningen, there had been no significant change whatsoever regarding the legal status, property or degree of protection of the Greek Ramsar sites. In general there had been no major changes due to human activities or interventions; all and any minor changes had been noted on the text sent for incorporation in the “Directory of Wetlands of International Importance”. The process of legal consolidation of the boundaries and of zoning was being promoted through the law Number 1650 dated 16 October 1986 on protection of the Environment. In conclusion, the delegation of Greece stated its wish to promote contacts with regional organizations in such a way as to ensure their participation in the programmes carried out under the Ramsar Convention.

The observer from the World Wide Fund for Nature-International (WWF-Int) noted the good relations which existed between his organization and the Greek Government and the fact that WWF had a project at Mikri Prespa National Park in Greece. He pointed out that since 1984 some US\$3 million had been expended by the EEC (European Economic Community) on land drainage and fish farm construction projects at the national park resulting in potential

water pollution and direct competition with waterbirds. As a result, he expressed grave concern for the future of this Ramsar site.

The delegation of Greece assured the Conference that the Greek Government was giving due consideration to the situation in Mikri Prespa National Park and that a supplementary study had been commissioned to investigate ways to minimize the damage to the site.

The delegation of Belgium drew the attention of the Conference to the direct or indirect effects of agricultural improvements on wetland habitats and reminded the delegates of Recommendation 1.3 of the Cagliari Meeting which urged priority in conserving such areas as tidal ecosystems, peat lands and wet grasslands. It further urged that this recommendation be re-adopted and that large subventions or financial support (as in the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy) for agricultural improvement programmes as well as aquaculture projects should first have compulsory ecological impact studies carried out.

Agenda Item XIV: Institutional Arrangements (continued)

The Chairman opened the floor for nominations for membership in the Standing Committee.

The delegation of Suriname proposed the delegation of Chile for nomination from the Southern American region. The delegation of Spain seconded the proposal.

The delegation of France proposed the delegation of the Netherlands for nomination from the Western European region, in view of the important role that the Netherlands had played as Chairman of the Task Force. The delegation of the United Kingdom seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Canada proposed the delegation of the United States for nomination from the Northern American region. The delegations of Mexico and Suriname seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Mauritania proposed the delegation of Tunisia for nomination from the African region. The delegation of Pakistan seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Jordan proposed the delegation of Pakistan for nomination from the Asian region. The delegation of Japan seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Hungary proposed the delegation of Poland for nomination from the Eastern European region. The delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Australia proposed the delegation of New Zealand for nomination from the Oceania region. The delegation of Pakistan seconded the proposal.

No further nominations were received. The nominees were appointed to the Standing Committee by consensus.

The Chairman informed the Conference that the present Conference host country, Canada, would be the eighth member of the Standing Committee whilst the ninth member, the next Conference host country, would be decided upon at the Friday morning session on 5 June.

Agenda Item XVI: Review of National Reports and Convention Implementation (continued)

The Chairman invited the Assistant Secretary-General to continue with the presentation of document C.3.6.

Turning to discussion of the section beginning paragraph 108 - action in respect of Groningen Recommendations - the Assistant Secretary-General proceeded to highlight the main features of each paragraph. Algeria (paragraph 109) had stated at Groningen that two new wetlands would be listed but these had yet to be designated. Argentina (110) had stated that it would accede to the Convention but had yet to do so. In the case of Australia (111), Bulgaria (112), Belgium (113) and Canada (114), proposed action reported at Groningen had been followed up. Chile (116) had reported that it required further clarification of the benefits of listing further sites before so doing. Costa Rica (117) was not yet a Contracting Party. Denmark (118) had listed the Waddensea. Finland (119) had not added further sites. France (120) intended to list other sites and gave details of the Marais de l'ouest. Hungary (123) had yet to list Tata Lake but the national report mentioned this and four other sites which were to be listed. Iceland (123) and India (125) had shown little follow-up on the Groningen Meeting. Italy (127) had listed only some of the sites it had mentioned but remained the Contracting Party with the largest number of sites on the List. Japan (129) had carried out its Groningen undertaking to list Lake Izu-numa. Mali (130) had deposited its instrument of ratification and Unesco had provisionally confirmed the listing of three sites. Mauritania (131) was making further efforts to list sites. Morocco (132) had provided new information but it was not known whether the Massa site would be listed. The Netherlands (135) gave few details on the Markermeer site which had been extensively commented upon at Groningen. The report noted that a memorandum had been presented to the Dutch Parliament identifying 103 wetlands that would eventually be designated for the List. Norway (137) had listed more sites than it had announced at Groningen. Poland (140) had also compiled a national list of 21 wetlands meeting Ramsar criteria. Portugal (141) reported that Sado and Paul do Boquilobo had been declared nature reserves but had not listed them as Ramsar sites. Senegal (142) had listed one site and indicated the possibility of designating a cross-border park with Gambia. South Africa (143) had designated a series of wetlands, some of considerable size. Suriname (144) had become an active Contracting Party. Sweden (145) had not listed further sites. Switzerland (146) had identified potential sites and indicated the possibility of listing these. Tunisia (147) had identified the Gulf of Gabès (on which an extensive report was available) as a possible site for listing. The United Kingdom (148) had stated at Groningen that it intended to list 132 sites and although twelve more had been designated, proposed areas for listing had first of all to be renotified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The United States (150) had become a Contracting Party and had initially listed four sites. It indicated the intention to list further sites. Uruguay (151) had suggested that another site be listed. Yugoslavia (152) had not submitted an official national report but contacts with IWRB had suggested that efforts were progressing to promote listing of wetlands by individual states.

Summing up, the Assistant Secretary-General concluded that much progress had taken place since Groningen.

The Chairman invited comments from the delegates.

The delegation of the Netherlands referred to paragraph 134 and stated that the polderization project for the Markermeer had been deferred. It informed the Conference of the availability of an English language version of the Dutch wetlands policy paper.

The delegation of Jordan made a statement disputing the claim of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran that wetlands in Iran had been destroyed by the use of chemical weapons. It said that the main reason for degradation of wetlands in the southwest and west of Iran was that they were located in a war zone.

The Chairman advised delegates that this Conference was an inappropriate forum for further discussion of this topic and that only ecological comment would be accepted.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed that the Conference was a scientific and technical forum and indicated that it was only concerned with subjects of an ecological nature. It had refrained from referring to political matters. The reference to chemical weapons or war damage had only been made in connection with listed wetlands that had suffered destruction as a result of the use of the said chemical weapons.

The Chairman invited the Assistant Secretary-General to conclude the presentation of the review.

Given the limited time available, the Assistant Secretary-General rapidly covered the remaining sections of document C.3.6 on National policy on wetlands and General Comments on the Convention. He noted that, in the sub-section entitled "Current national wetland situations", information on the general condition of wetlands in each Contracting Party had been sought. Few reports had addressed this matter, though the reports from Poland and the United Kingdom had presented thought-provoking statements. The sub-sections of the reports on policy adopted to promote wise use had been covered in much greater detail than at Cagliari and Groningen. The recently submitted Danish report had provided information on the prohibition of lead shot in Danish Ramsar areas. The recently received US report had indicated that national policies had evolved to recognize the broadest array of wetland values. He noted that, according to comments on the "Framework for implementing the Convention" adopted at Groningen, this document had had limited impact. Commenting on the final section, he drew attention to the instances where the Convention had facilitated conservation (paragraphs 242 to 247), noting the additional comment from the Danish report on the effect of the Convention at Ringkøbing and Nissum Fjord.

Thanking the Assistant Secretary-General for his presentation, the Chairman expressed regret that, because of the other important business of the Conference, time had been so limited for discussion of national reports and implementation of the Convention.

The session was closed at 17h30.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Ninth Session: 4 June 1987, 08h30-17h00

Chairman: Mr. F. Dunkle

Secretariat: Mr. D. Navid (Secretary-General of the Conference)

Rapporteur: Mr. A.J. Mence

Agenda Item XVIII: Wetland Conservation in North America

Mr. Frank Dunkle, Director, US Fish and Wildlife Service, designated as Chairman for the

“North America Day” opened the session at 08h30. After greeting the participants he introduced the Hon. Tom McMillan, Federal Minister of Environment, who gave a welcoming address on behalf of the Government of Canada. The Chairman then introduced the Hon. Eric A. Berntson, Deputy Premier of the Province of Saskatchewan, who delivered a welcoming address on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Session I: “Wetland Conservation: National Issues and Current Conservation Initiatives”

Having thanked the Hon. Ministers for their opening remarks, the Chairman invited Mr. Harvey K. Nelson and Dr. James H. Patterson to present overviews of wetland conservation in the United States and Canada respectively.

The morning session was concluded by a presentation by Mr. Joost van der Ven entitled “Observations from Afar”.

Session II: “National Private Wetland Conservation Initiatives”

The afternoon session commenced with five presentations. The first, given by Mr. Thomas G. McMillan, described the work of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The second, given by Mr. David J. Neave, described the work of the Wildlife Habitat Canada.

The remaining three presentations were given by Mr. Matthew B. Connelly, Mr. Eric Gustafson and Mr. D. Stewart Morrison, who described the work of Ducks Unlimited in, respectively, the United States, Mexico and Canada.

The Hon. Cohn Maxwell and Ed Begin jointly presented a paper entitled “Regional Wetland Conservation Initiatives - Saskatchewan”, which was followed by the Presentation of New North American Ramsar Sites delivered by Mr. Larry Mason on behalf of the United States and Mr. H.A. Clarke on behalf of Canada. Mr. Mason announced the designation of two new sites by the United States on the List of Wetlands of International Importance: The Everglades National Park; Florida, and Chesapeake Bay Wetlands System, Virginia and Maryland.

At 16h30 the Chairman summarized the presentations and introduced the Guest Speaker, H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh.

H.R.H. Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, president of WWF and Vice-President of IUCN, addressed the Conference.

The Chairman thanked all the speakers and declared the meeting closed at 17h00.

Due to the bulk of these proceedings, and if funding allows it, the North American Day presentations may be published in a separate volume.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Tenth Session: 5 June 1987, 09h30 - 13h20

Chairman: Mr. D. Sherratt

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

Secretary-General of the Conference)
Rapporteurs: Mr. A. J. Mence, Mr. Z.J. Karpowicz

Opening of the Meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting and invited participants to consider the circulated summary reports of previous plenary sessions (documents PLEN. C.3.5 to PLEN. C.3.9) with a view to their adoption.

Document PLEN. C.3.5 was adopted, without amendment, by consensus. The Chairman noted the following three corrections to document PLEN. C.3.5:

- Page 8, paragraph 2, line 10: the words “was already” should be deleted.
- Page 9, paragraph 3, line 8: the word “that” should be replaced by the words “the use of”.
- Page 9, paragraph 11: This paragraph should be amended to read “The delegation of Austria stated that ratification of the Paris Protocol was still under consideration.”

The delegation of Belgium requested that on page 9 paragraph 10 be amended to read “The delegation of Belgium stated that Belgium would probably be signing the Paris Protocol in the current year.”

The delegation of Spain requested that on page 9 paragraph 5 be amended to read “27 May 1987” instead of “5 May 1987”.

The delegation of Mauritania requested that on page 9 paragraph 8 be amended to read “12 May 1987” instead of “12 April 1987”.

Document PLEN. C.3.6, with the above amendments, was then adopted by consensus.

Turning to document PLEN. C.3.7, the delegation of France noted that on page 1 of the French version, the heading should refer to Agenda item XIV and not Agenda item XVI.

The delegation of the Netherlands requested that, on page 4 paragraph 6, the word “extra” be deleted from the last line.

The delegation of Japan requested that, on page 4 paragraph 5, the words “amendments to the budget would take some time to be accommodated” be replaced by the words “amendments adopted at the Extraordinary Meeting would take some time to be accepted”.

Document PLEN. C.3. 7, with the above amendments, was then adapted by consensus.

In the review of document PLEN. C.3.8, the observer from Guatemala commented that the terms “Northern America” and “Southern America” as used in the text of the footnote quoted on page 1 were imprecise, and suggested that “Southern America” be replaced by the term “the Caribbean, Central and South America”. The Secretary-General stated that the ad hoc Technical Committee had taken “Northern America” to mean Mexico, the United States of America and Canada, while “Southern America” comprised the other States of the Western Hemisphere. The delegation of Denmark, Vice-Chairman of the Conference, pointed out that

this wording had already been discussed in an ad hoc Technical Committee meeting and adopted in plenary session, and that further debate was therefore inappropriate. The delegation of Pakistan, Vice-Chairman of the Conference, agreed with this view and noted that the text of the footnote provided for flexibility and for any necessary change at a future meeting of the Conference. He added that the present text had already been applied in the appointment of the Standing Committee.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran requested that the first sentence of the last paragraph of page 3 be amended to read “The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran then drew the attention of the delegates to the destruction of the two listed wetlands of Shadegan Marshes and tidal mud-flats of Khor al Amaya and Khor Musa in southwestern Iran, which it attributed to the use of chemical weapons by Iraq and the continuing war in the region.”

The delegation of Belgium requested that, on page 4, paragraph 3, the word “designated” in line 12 be replaced by the words “proposed for designation”.

The delegation of Spain requested that, on page 5, paragraph 6 be replaced by the following text:

“The delegation of Spain considered that a document entitled “Survey of national reports submitted by Contracting Parties and Review of Implementation of the Convention since the Second Meeting in Groningen” should not include information other than that officially submitted by the Contracting Party concerned. Since the Spanish national report had not been submitted, information from other sources should not have been used. It considered that threats to wetlands in Spain represented one of the most serious conservation problems for the country and new problems were appearing. In this context, it stressed the role that the Bureau had to play in providing scientific and technical assistance to Contracting Parties.”

The observer of WWF - International requested that, on page 6, the phrase “by 1984” in paragraph 4, line 4, be replaced by “since 1984”.

Document PLEN. C.3.8, with the above amendments, was then adopted by consensus.

Document PLEN. C.3.9 was adopted by consensus.

The Chairman noted that the Summary Report of the tenth Plenary Session would be circulated by the Secretariat after the Third Meeting of the Conference. At the Chairman’s suggestion, the meeting authorized the Secretariat to make any small and non-substantive editorial or typographical amendments to the summary reports of Plenary Sessions and to the Resolutions on Secretariat Matters, Financial and Budgetary Matters and Establishment of a Standing Committee.

Agenda item XII: Report of Credentials Committee (continued)

Mr. P. Havet (France), deputizing for the Chairman of the Credentials Committee Mr. A. Megret who was indisposed, presented the final report of the Credentials Committee (document CRED. C.3.1). He noted that the credentials of 30 Contracting Parties had been accepted by the Committee for the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item XVI: Review of National Reports and Convention Implementation (continued)

With reference to paragraph 22 of document C.3.6, the delegation of Japan announced that the National Diet had approved the Paris Protocol and would shortly transmit instruments of ratification to the Depositary. The Secretary-General welcomed this news and expressed the hope that other Contracting Parties that had not yet become Parties to the Paris Protocol would be encouraged to do so.

Agenda items XVII and XIX: Consideration and Adoption of Conference Report - Recommendations and Decisions

The Chairman pointed out that the Conference had already adopted most of its Report (made up of the summary report of Plenary Sessions) and Decisions (made up of the four Resolutions on Secretariat Matters, Financial and Budgetary Matters, Establishment of a Standing Committee and Provisional Implementation of the Amendments to the Convention). Because of pressure of other business, there had been no time on 3 June for the planned session to consider Conference Recommendations. He therefore proposed taking the agenda items on consideration and adoption of recommendations together.

At the Chairman's invitation, the Assistant Secretary-General introduced the draft texts of recommendations. Since the reports and results of the Working Groups had already been discussed under Agenda items XI and XV, draft Recommendations 3.1 to 3.4 and the Annex to the Recommendations, all of which derived from the deliberations of the Working Groups, were left until the end.

The meeting first considered the three draft recommendations on further Contracting Parties in Africa, Southern America and Asia and the Pacific.

In consideration of document REC. C.3.6 (Rev.), the Chairman pointed out that the word "Zambia" should be included after "Uganda" in the operative paragraph. With this amendment, Recommendation 3.6 on Further Contracting Parties in Africa was proposed by the delegation of the United Kingdom and seconded by the delegation of the United States of America. It was adopted by consensus. The observer from Zambia welcomed the Recommendation, as did the observer from Egypt who indicated that his country had nominated two wetlands for inclusion in the List and would therefore complete requirements to become a Contracting Party in the near future.

The Chairman presented document REC. C.3.7 (Rev.), and accepted suggestions from the observer from Guatemala, supported by the delegations of Canada and Chile, that the title be amended to read "Further Contracting Parties in Central America, the Caribbean and South America", that the words "Southern America" in the first paragraph be replaced by the words "the Western Hemisphere", and that in the operative paragraph the words "that are not already Contracting Parties" be added after "Western Hemisphere". With these amendments, Recommendation 3.7 was proposed by the delegation of Chile, who expressed the wish that countries of the region cooperate in the implementation of conservation policies. The delegations of Mexico and the United States of America expressed support for the proposal which was adopted by consensus. The observers from Guatemala and Peru indicated that their countries greatly appreciated the proposal; the observer from Peru added that his country was well on the way to becoming a Contracting Party.

The Chairman then presented document REC. C.3.10 (Rev.) on Further Contracting Parties in Asia and the Pacific. Its adoption without amendment was formally proposed by the delegation of Japan and seconded by the delegation of the United States of America. After its adoption by consensus, the observer from Indonesia welcomed this Recommendation and said he would recommend his government should give serious consideration to becoming a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention.

The Chairman then introduced document REC. C.3.8 (Rev.) on Conservation of Azraq Ramsar site, noting one small amendment to the final operative paragraph which should read “URGES that there be established a long-term water resources plan guaranteeing the maintenance of the natural properties of this wetland of international importance”. The observer from Venezuela asked whether the figure of 50 % mentioned in the penultimate paragraph should not be reduced. The Assistant Secretary-General explained that the figure was already qualified, in agreement with the delegation of Jordan, by the phrase “at least” and by the call for a proper assessment of the environmental impact of the pumping. The observer from Venezuela accepted that these qualifications gave sufficient flexibility, while supporting the aims of Jordanian conservation bodies. The delegation of the United States of America stated that the delegation of Jordan, which had been obliged to leave the Conference, had requested the delegation of the United States of America to propose adoption of the Recommendation. As amended by the Chairman, the Recommendation, proposed by the delegation of the United States of America and seconded by the delegation of the United Kingdom, was adopted by consensus.

The Chairman then introduced document REC. C.3.5 (Rev.). The delegation of Switzerland suggested that the word “Tasks” was more appropriate than “Responsibilities” in the title, which should read “Tasks of the Bureau in respect to Development Agencies”. The observer from WWF-International suggested that, since the European Economic Community was not a Development Agency, the words “the Development Fund of” should be inserted after “such as” in the Note. The delegation of Mauritania proposed deletion of the word “unique” in the second paragraph of the Preamble. The delegation of Switzerland noted that, in the French version of this same second paragraph, the word “ou” should be replaced by the word “et”; in answer to his enquiry whether the words “utilisation rationnelle” were an appropriate translation of the English phrase “wise use”, the Assistant Secretary-General confirmed that these were the words employed in the authentic French text of the Convention. The delegation of the Netherlands suggested that the words “conservation and” be included between “promoting” and “wise use” in section 3 of the operative paragraph of the Recommendation; the delegation of the United States of America commented that, in its view, wise use by definition included conservation, though it did not object to the proposal from the Netherlands. The delegation of Pakistan proposed adoption of the Recommendation with the above-mentioned amendments. The proposal was seconded by the delegation of the Netherlands and adopted by the meeting by consensus.

The Chairman then presented document REC. C.3.9 (Rev.) which dealt with Ramsar sites mentioned in document C.3.6.

The observer from WWF-International indicated that an urgent message had been received about one of the sites mentioned, Galgenschoor, part of the Lower Scheldt Estuary Ramsar site in Belgium, from Mr. Paul Staes, a Belgian member of the European Parliament. The message from Mr. Staes was as follows:

“I most urgently call upon the common sense of Contracting Parties and non-governmental organizations and other observers at the Ramsar Conference, not to accept the destruction of one natural area - at Galgenschoor - in order to have another one declared. In this case, the grasslands and freshwater marshes of the Yzer are not comparable with the saltmarshes of the Galgenschoor which is to be lost. To accept this would be to begin to devalue the principles upon which the Convention is based. Many organizations concerned with nature protection and many individuals in Belgium are today dismayed to learn that the Convention may accept this loss, and urgently call on Contracting Parties to reject such a loss. I note that this is European Year of the Environment and that Belgium has the EEC Presidency until June. Thus this development is even less acceptable.”

The observer from Stichting Natuur en Milieu supported the comments made by the observer from WWF-International and stated that he too had received a telex from over 60 Belgian and Dutch conservation organizations on the subject of Galgenschoor. He read the following extract from the telex:

“Nature and environment conservation organizations vehemently protest against and reject the Belgian proposal for compensation of reduction in the Ramsar Convention protected Galgenschoor, mainly for reasons of principle, but also because the proposed compensation is highly unrealistic, since all of the Yzer Valley and Blankaart are highly threatened by present structural destruction now operational with support of Belgian state-controlled organizations.”

In response to these two messages, the delegation of Belgium confirmed that Belgium was considering reducing the area of the Galgenschoor wetland by 27 or 28 hectares, in conformity with Article 4.2 of the Convention. The Belgian Ministry of Public Works, in a letter to the Belgian Foreign Ministry dated 26 March 1987, had recognized that Galgenschoor was an area of exceptional ecological value, and had asked the Foreign Ministry to inform the Convention Bureau that all the provisions of Article 4.2 would be carried out. This meant that the reduction in area would be compensated by establishment of an additional natural area. The delegation of Belgium wished to object formally to the statements made against the Belgian proposal to withdraw 27 hectares of the Galgenschoor site from the List. It added that no reply could be made to these statements, since the matter was still under discussion in Belgium.

The delegation of Sweden, as one of the proposers of the draft recommendation, stated that, given the limited time available for discussion, it was inappropriate to single out individual threatened sites noted in document C.3.6.

The observer from WWF-International commented that the messages about Galgenschoor illustrated the serious interest of politicians in wetland conservation and their expectation that the Ramsar Convention would do something about the threat to Galgenschoor. If wealthy countries could not comply with the Convention's minimal requirement of conserving listed wetlands, how could developing countries be expected to pursue the broader and more ambitious goals of promoting wise use of all wetlands? The observer therefore suggested amending document REC C.3.9 with a call to the Flemish Executive to reconsider construction of the proposed container terminal at Galgenschoor and to maintain the area's current status. Whether or not this amendment was possible, WWF urged the Contracting Parties to instruct the Standing Committee to prepare firm proposals for a mechanism to protect sites listed under the Convention, to circulate these proposals to all Contracting

Parties for immediate implementation, and to review the effectiveness of the mechanism at the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

The Chairman stated that the Standing Committee could take up this issue for further action. The delegation of the United States of America suggested that it was appropriate for the Secretariat to comment on the possible delisting of sites and that the Standing Committee could be approached to ascertain their feelings on this subject.

The delegation of Sweden then formally proposed adoption of Recommendation 3.9 without amendment. The proposal, seconded by the delegation of Finland and supported by the delegation of Italy, was adopted by consensus.

The meeting then considered documents REC. C.3.1 to C.3.4 and the Annex to the Recommendations, all of which derived from the deliberations of the workshops. The Chairman introduced document REC. C.3.1 (Rev.) and the part of the Annex referring to criteria. The delegation of Australia noted that much time and effort had been devoted to this subject, and that although little time was available for discussion, it hoped the Recommendation could be approved. These comments were received with general applause.

The observer from IWRB suggested that, in view of the limited time available, membership of the proposed Working Group on criteria be handled by the Standing Committee rather than the plenary session, and that in the final paragraph of the Recommendation, the words "Third Meeting" therefore be replaced by "Standing Committee". This suggestion met with the approval of the delegations of Australia and Canada.

Turning to discussion of that part of the Annex devoted to criteria, the Chairman suggested it was inappropriate, in view of the considerable time and effort already devoted to the subject, to make substantive changes, particularly if a Working Group was to be established to review criteria. The observer from IWRB noted that the list of waterfowl at the end of the guidelines had originally been much shorter and more specific; the expanded list included all waterfowl and was not helpful. He therefore suggested the paragraph beginning "Waterfowl indicative of wetland values" be deleted. A new list could be drawn up at a later date with reference to workshop documents. This suggestion was supported by the delegations of Australia and Spain.

With reference to guideline (e) on page 2 of the Annex, the delegation of Canada suggested deletion of the words "in developing countries" on the grounds that the terms of the guideline applied equally to developing and developed countries. Some of the world's largest Ramsar sites in Northern Canada were used and would continue to be used by native people for hunting and fishing - a demonstration of socio-economic value and sustainable use. The delegation of Australia felt it was important to retain the reference to developing countries in this guideline. The delegation of Canada therefore withdrew its suggestion, but asked for the record to include a reference to its view that guideline (e) was applicable to Canada. The delegation of New Zealand stated that this guideline was also applicable to New Zealand.

The delegation of Australia suggested that the words "and habitat conservation" be added to the end of guideline (e) on page 2 of the Annex.

The delegation of Mauritania then proposed adoption of the Recommendation (as amended to replace "Third Meeting" by "Standing Committee") and of that part of the Annex dealing

with criteria (as amended to add the words “and habitat conservation” to guideline (e) and with the deletion of the paragraph on waterfowl indicative of wetland values). It added its conviction that the proposed Working Group could easily be established at the present meeting. The delegation of Norway seconded the proposal, which was also supported by the delegations of France and Switzerland and was approved by consensus. The delegation of Australia placed on record its appreciation of the work done on this matter, in particular by the informal working group and by Messrs. Eldoy, Lyster and Smart.

The Chairman presented document REC. C.3.2 (Rev.). The delegation of the United Kingdom proposed its adoption. This was seconded by the delegation of Chile and supported by the delegation of France. The Recommendation was adopted without amendment by consensus.

The Chairman then presented document REC. C.3.3 (Rev.), together with that part of the Annex dealing with wise use. He noted that much thought had gone into drafting of the document and advised against substantive amendments at this late juncture. He suggested that the Secretariat be empowered to take account of the observation by the delegation of Switzerland that the repetition in guidelines (a) to (f) of the precise terms of the Recommendation was perhaps unnecessary. The delegation of Mexico proposed the adoption of the Recommendation and the part of the Annex dealing with wise use. This proposal was seconded by the delegation of the United Kingdom and approved by consensus.

The Chairman then presented document REC. C.3.4 (Rev.). The Chairman pointed out that, to ensure consistency with Recommendation 3.5, the words “Development Fund of the” should be inserted between “the” and “European Economic Community” in the introductory “Note”. The delegation of Norway suggested that, in sub-paragraph (b) of the second operative paragraph on page 2, the first line be amended to read “to strengthen the institutional arrangements and the ecological expertise both at national level and among”. The delegation of Chile, noting that this text complemented Recommendation 3.5, proposed its adoption as amended. This proposal was seconded by the delegation of the United States of America and approved by consensus. The delegation of the United States further requested the Secretariat to take the necessary steps to transmit the Conference’s Recommendations to all Development Agencies, thus promoting their responsibility towards wetlands.

The Secretary-General then presented document REC. C.3.11, which the Secretariat had drafted to express the Conference’s thanks to its Canadian hosts. The text was greeted by applause from the floor, indicating its adoption by acclamation.

Agenda item XX: Next Regular Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

The Chairman opened the discussion to the floor. The delegation of Switzerland said that Switzerland was a small country in the centre of Europe which depended for the survival of its fauna, and especially migratory birds, to a considerable extent, on the will and on the conservation possibilities of neighbouring countries and their wetlands. From the outset therefore Switzerland had attached considerable importance to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Switzerland had been a Contracting Party to the Convention since 1976, and from 1983 it had made a modest voluntary financial contribution to help cover part of the secretariat costs.

Switzerland was greatly honoured to be the headquarters of the International Union for

Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and had been able to make a contribution to the development of this organization. It had also been able to take advantage of IUCN's knowledge and experience in the field of nature conservation. Since IUCN at present performed continuing bureau duties for the Convention, Switzerland was also the country which hosted the Convention. For this reason, the Swiss Government was ready, within the limits of its own possibilities, to support the establishment and the proper functioning of the Convention's new permanent structures. These would be established on the basis of the amendments to the text of the Convention approved by the Extraordinary Conference of the Contracting Parties on 28 May.

The Swiss Government had decided at its session of 20 May 1987 that it was ready to apply, on a provisional basis and subject to ratification of the amended Articles 6 and 7 of the Convention, the decisions taken on the basis of these Articles and that, in particular, it would pay on a voluntary basis the sum set out in the list of annual contributions to be made by the Contracting Parties.

The Swiss Government furthermore had the honour and the pleasure to invite the Conference of the Contracting Parties to hold its next ordinary meeting in Switzerland, probably in the period late May/early June of 1990. The State Council of the Canton of Vaud, where IUCN was situated, had associated itself with this proposal by the federal Government, and if the present Conference were to take a positive decision on this matter, it would not fail to take all necessary measures to ensure that the meeting was held in the best possible conditions.

The delegation of Switzerland concluded by saying that Switzerland would be very happy, as a member State, to be able to host the next ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Ramsar Convention and hoped the Conference would accept its invitation.

This invitation was greeted by loud applause and the Conference accepted it by acclamation.

The Secretary-General noted that the conditions and undertakings involved in organizing a meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties were included in an Agreement between IUCN and the host country. He requested that a mandate be given to the Standing Committee to assist in the negotiation of this Agreement. This mandate was given by consensus.

Agenda item XXI: Any Other Business

The delegation of Pakistan thanked delegations for appointing the Standing Committee. It informed the Conference that the delegation of Pakistan had been elected Chairman of the Standing Committee, and the delegation of Canada Vice-Chairman. The Standing Committee had already held two meetings and a report on its deliberations would be circulated. The delegation of Pakistan assured the Conference that the Standing Committee would do its utmost to ensure the implementation of the Recommendations and, before leaving the Conference, emphasized the need to fund the operation of the Bureau and Standing Committee.

The delegation of Canada added that the delegation of Pakistan had asked the delegation of Canada, in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee, to stress the urgent need for Contracting Parties to make voluntary financial contributions immediately in 1987, so that the work of the Bureau and Standing Committee could proceed as efficiently as possible.

The delegation of Mauritania recalled that the Working Group whose establishment was called for in Recommendation 3.1 had not yet been set up. The delegation of Canada in its capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee requested members of the Standing Committee and other interested parties to meet briefly after the Plenary Session to decide on the membership of this Working Group.

The delegation of Greece requested that the various written submissions it had submitted to the Conference secretariat be incorporated into the summary reports of plenary sessions.

The delegation of Suriname requested that copies of any communications submitted through diplomatic channels be sent in addition to the Suriname Forest Service, which was the appropriate administrative authority. The Secretary-General said it was the Bureau's practice to send copies of notes transmitted by diplomatic channels to appropriate national authorities. In order to promote this process, he requested delegations to review the list of authorities in document INF. C.3.10 and to inform the Bureau of any amendments or additions.

Agenda item XXII: Closure of the Meeting

The observer from Guatemala expressed appreciation of the opportunity to attend the present meeting, and of the financial support provided for participants from developing countries. The observer reported that participants from Central and South America had met informally and decided to send a letter to the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, drawing his attention to the importance of the Ramsar Convention and requesting his intervention to ensure that further States from the region became Contracting Parties.

The delegation of the United Kingdom thanked the Secretariat, the interpreters, the hotel staff, the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the meeting for all their hard work. This vote of thanks was endorsed by acclamation.

The observer from IWRB said he had prepared a farewell address; in the interest of saving time however he did not deliver it, but requested that the text be included in the Proceedings of the Conference. The observer from IUCN thanked the Conference for its continuing confidence in the Bureau and paid tribute to the support provided by IWRB and in particular to the personal contribution of Prof. Matthews, Director of IWRB. The observer from WWF-International expressed thanks for the opportunity to participate in the meeting.

The observer from Kenya requested that the Statement by Kenya, already distributed to participants, be included in the Proceedings of the Conference.

The Chairman of the Canadian Steering Committee for the Conference, Mr. Gordon Kerr, wished all participants a safe journey home. The Canadian Conference Coordinator, Ms. Penny West, said how much the North American staff had enjoyed working with the Conference secretariat and with participants in the meeting.

The Chairman expressed his own thanks to the Vice-Chairmen and to the Chairmen of the Working Groups. Remarking on the appropriateness of finishing the work of this Conference, which had done so much to strengthen the Convention, on World Environment Day, he declared the meeting closed at 13h20.

Closing statement by G V T Matthews at the Third Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention. Regina 1987

A curate was served with an egg at the house of his bishop. The latter, observing some hesitation on the part of his junior, enquired if the egg were bad. "Only in parts, my Lord" was the answer. This has been something of a Curate's Egg of a Conference.

Far more time than was desirable (or planned) was spent over legal niceties rather than dealing with conservation. Philosophers of old debated how many angels could stand on the head of a pin. This Conference has had similar concerns with regards to delegates and committees. There was not time enough left to discover what was really happening in those countries that did not provide a National Report. Nor could we debate what should be done about wetland degradations when they were reported. Indeed consideration of these vital matters was compressed into a couple of hours. I hope the next Conference will redress the balance, or observers from yet uncommitted countries will get quite a wrong idea of what the Convention is about.

However it is good that we have the structure of a Secretariat in place, a Standing Committee to guide it, and promises of funds from many Parties. IWRB will be very happy to play the supporting role in which it is now confirmed, working closely with our partners in IUCN.

Nevertheless the Secretariat is essentially the servant of the Parties and can only act and report as they decide. There is still a vital need for the influence and action of the non-governmental organizations. It was encouraging to see their increasing impact on this Conference.

It is good to strive to increase the numbers of the Contracting Parties and of the Listed wetlands. But this is not an end in itself. Our real concern should be with the effective conservation of those wetlands that have been listed and the wise use of the multitude of unlisted ones. If we play the numbers game let us strive to list 10% of the world's wetlands. With some estimates putting these at 20,000, there is still a long way to go. And even then we should be aiming for 10% of the area of the wetlands, not simply 10% of a number which will depend on arbitrary demarcations.

Having helped the Convention from conception, through gestation, birth and development to lusty independence, I can retire from the scene in a happy frame of mind. It is said of an England's Queen, Mary, who struggled incessantly to regain former possessions in France, that the word 'Calais' was found engraved on her heart when she died. I wouldn't be surprised if they found 'Ramsar' on mine.