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Greece: Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works  
Netherlands: Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Costa Rica  
Spain: Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), and the Biodiversity Foundation, Ministry of Environment  
Switzerland: Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape  
United States: Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of Interior), and Department of State

IUCN-The World Conservation Union  
The Nature Conservancy  
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

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National Chamber of Tourism  
Organization of Tropical Studies (OTS)  
Radiográfica Costarricense S.A. (RACSA)  
The Coffee Institute (ICAFE)  
The National Parks Foundation  
UMC of Costa Rica, Computer Equipment



## List of Contracting Parties in attendance at the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

Albania	Egypt	Madagascar
Algeria	El Salvador	Malaysia
Argentina	Estonia	Mali
Armenia	Finland	Malta
Australia	France	Mauritania
Austria	Gabon	Mexico
Bahamas	Gambia	Monaco
Bangladesh	Georgia	Mongolia
Belgium	Germany	Morocco
Belize	Ghana	Namibia
Bolivia	Greece	Nepal
Botswana	Guatemala	Netherlands
Brazil	Guinea	New Zealand
Bulgaria	Guinea-Bissau	Nicaragua
Burkina Faso	Honduras	Niger
Canada	Hungary	Norway
Chad	Iceland	Pakistan
Chile	India	Panama
China	Indonesia	Papua New Guinea
Colombia	Iran, Islamic Republic of	Paraguay
Comoros	Ireland	Peru
Congo	Israel	Philippines
Congo, Democratic Republic of	Italy	Poland
Costa Rica	Jamaica	Portugal
Côte d'Ivoire	Japan	Republic of Korea
Croatia	Jordan	Romania
Czech Republic	Kenya	Russian Federation
Denmark	Latvia	Senegal
Ecuador	Lithuania	Slovak Republic

Slovenia  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sri Lanka  
Suriname  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Syrian Arab Republic

Thailand  
The former Yugoslav  
Republic of Macedonia  
Togo  
Trinidad & Tobago  
Tunisia  
Turkey  
Uganda  
Ukraine

United Kingdom  
United States of America  
Uruguay  
Venezuela  
Viet Nam  
Zambia

## Notes on the First Plenary Session

10 May 1999, 10.00-18.30

### Agenda Items I/II: Opening Ceremony

1. Mr. Delmar Blasco, Secretary General of the Convention, welcomed the participants. A message was delivered by Mr Jonathan A. Kusi on behalf of Mr Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Director General of UNESCO, the Depositary of the Convention on Wetlands. Dr Maritta R. von Bieberstein Koch-Weser, Director General of IUCN-The World Conservation Union, made a welcoming and policy statement on behalf of the four International NGO Partners of the Convention: BirdLife International, IUCN, Wetlands International, and WWF International.
2. Lic. Elizabeth Odio Benito, Second Vice President of the Republic and Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, delivered a welcoming statement.
3. The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards were presented by the President of Costa Rica and the Minister of Environment and Energy. The Evian Special Prize that accompanied the Ramsar Award was handed over by the Director General of the Evian Mineral Waters Company, Mr Yves Buchsenschutz. The Awards were presented to:
  - Professor Vitaly G. Krivenko, Russian Federation
  - Sr Victor Pulido, Peru
  - Lake Naivasha Riparian Association, Kenya
  - Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
  - Pacific Estuary Conservation Program, Canada
4. The 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention was officially opened by Dr Miguel Ángel Rodríguez E., President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

### Agenda Item III: Adoption of the Agenda

5. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee called for a moment of silence for a dear colleague and extraordinary gentlemen, Mr Cyril de Klemm, who passed away on the first of April, 1999. The Chairperson described him as a valued advisor to the Convention for many years who had contributed a great deal to the development of the treaty. He will be remembered as a person of vision and wisdom who will be greatly missed by the Convention.
6. The Agenda, circulated as Ramsar COP7 DOC. 1 Rev.2, was adopted by consensus.

### Agenda Item IV: Rules of Procedure

7. Following Resolution VI.15 of the 6<sup>th</sup> COP, the revised Rules of Procedure were circulated as Ramsar COP7 DOC. 2. After comments and proposals for amendments from Brazil,

China, Congo, Egypt, India, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, the Rules of Procedure were adopted by consensus with Rule 1 and Rule 56 modified as follows:

**Rule 1**

These rules of procedure shall apply to any meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) convened in accordance with article 6 of the Convention, subject to their adoption by consensus at the start of each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

**Rule 56**

These rules of procedure shall apply immediately after their adoption.

**Agenda Item V: Election of the President and Vice-Presidents**

8. Following the recommendation of the Conference Committee, Lic. Elizabeth Odio Benito, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, was elected as President of COP7, and the Hon. Kezimbira Miyingo of Uganda and Mr Veit Koester of Denmark were elected as Vice-Presidents by acclamation.
9. **Special Intervention 1:**  
**Dr Franklin Chang Díaz**, American/Costa Rican astronaut, made a special presentation on “Water seen from space”.
10. **Special Intervention 2:**  
A new video entitled “The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands” was screened and the Secretary General informed the Contracting Parties that copies in either English, French or Spanish would be sent to them in the coming months.

**Agenda Item VI: Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees**

11. Following the recommendation of the Conference Committee, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Guatemala, Mongolia, Switzerland, and Togo were elected to the Credentials Committee by consensus.

**Agenda Item VII: Admission of Observers**

12. The observers listed in Annex I of COP7 DOC. 3 were admitted by consensus.
13. Argentina requested that its reservation over the admission of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum be minuted.

**Agenda Item VIII a): Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee**

14. Ms Louis Lakos (Hungary), Chairperson of the Standing Committee, introduced her report on the work of the Standing Committee during the past triennium.

**Agenda Item VIII b): Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)**

15. In the absence of the Chairperson of the STRP, Dr. Yaa Ntiamo-Baidu, the STRP member for Asia, Dr Makoto Komoda (Japan), presented the report.





such issues as the designation of new Ramsar sites, the significance of donor support in implementing the Strategic Plan, the importance of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund, problems of invasive species, the need for training courses, non-payment of contributions by Contracting Parties, the important impact of socio-political problems on wetlands, and the critical role of NGOs in the region.

24. A number of interventions made reference to the need for minor amendments to the Overview and these comments will be incorporated in the web site version of this document, as well as in any future copies that may be distributed.

### **Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the Eastern European Region and in the Western European Region**

25. The Regional Coordinator for Europe at the Ramsar Bureau presented the Overview for Western and Eastern Europe.
26. The Deputy Secretary General, speaking on behalf of the Secretary General, informed the meeting that the Regional Coordinator for Europe, Mr Tim Jones, will be leaving the Ramsar Bureau soon after the COP; he thanked him for his many years of dedicated work for the Convention.
27. **Special Intervention 7:**  
**Mr Bruno Julien**, representative of the European Commission, presented “Protection of sensitive areas in the European Union- a contribution to the Ramsar Convention”.
28. The delegates making interventions congratulated the Government of Costa Rica for its generosity in hosting the COP and thanked the Government for its kind hospitality. They also thanked the Ramsar Bureau for its work in preparing the documents and its assistance in organizing the meeting. Many delegates especially thanked Mr Tim Jones for his outstanding work within the two regions over many years and wished him well in his future career.
29. Interventions on the overview were made by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Wetlands International, and WWF, on such issues as new Ramsar sites, wetland restoration commitments, the importance of a more regional approach to development of wetland policies, the significance of bilateral cooperation, development of national strategies, removal of sites from the Montreux Record, and the under-representation of semi-wet grasslands in the Ramsar List.
30. A number of interventions made reference to the need for minor amendments to the Overview and these comments will be incorporated in the web site version of this document, as well as in any future copies that may be distributed.
31. Croatia and Slovenia registered their objection to the inclusion of the National Report of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Overview since it was not yet resolved whether it should be considered a Contracting Party to the Convention.
32. Spain informed the meeting that, on May 7, the Spanish Government’s Cabinet agreed to offer to host the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in 2002.

33. The Regional Coordinator for Europe said that he felt honoured and privileged to have worked with the Convention and Contracting Parties over many years and in various capacities. He wished them all the best in their future work on wetland conservation and wise use and thanked them for their kind words.
34. **Special Intervention 8:**  
**Dr Geoffrey Howard**, Programme Coordinator, IUCN East Africa Regional Office presented “Invasive species and wetlands”.

### **Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the Neotropical Region**

35. The Secretary General stated that the Regional Coordinator for the Neotropics, Dr Montserrat Carbonnell, left the Ramsar Bureau at the end of 1998, and he recorded his thanks to her for the fine work she had done for the Convention. He noted that Mr Néstor Windevoxhel had been brought in as a Special Advisor to the Bureau for the COP and that the Bureau was very grateful to his organization, PROARCA/COSTAS, for allowing him to fulfill this function.
36. The Special Advisor to the Neotropical Region presented the overview of the Neotropical Region.
37. **Special Intervention 9:**  
**Ing. Dimas Arcia**, Sub-Administrator General, Panamanian National Authority of the Environment, presented the initiative to establish a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere in Panama.
38. Interventions were made by Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Organization of American States, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, and WWF, on a range of issues such as evaluation of National Wetland Plans and their implementation, designation of new Ramsar sites, the role of appropriate legislation in improving wetland management strategies, encouraging full membership of the Convention in the Caribbean, inventoring of invasive species, and the significance of the Wetlands for the Future initiative and the Ramsar SGF in funding wetland conservation in the region.
39. Delegates making interventions thanked the Government of Costa Rica for hosting COP7 and the Bureau for its preparation of the documents and role in organizing the conference. Many delegates expressed their great appreciation for the work of Dr. Montserrat Carbonnell in the Region.
40. **Special Intervention 10:**  
**Dr Jorge Jiménez Ramón**, Organization of Tropical Studies, presented “Wetland conservation and sustainable use in Costa Rica”.
41. **Special Intervention 11:**  
**Mrs Geke Faber**, State Secretary for Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, The Netherlands, delivered a statement to the plenary.



49. Uruguay, with support from Brazil and Peru, expressed the Neotropical region's concern that the proposed criteria for SC membership proportions were merely quantitative, and they suggested other criteria (such as biodiversity values, number and relevance of Ramsar sites, potential for new sites) which might be more valuable. It was proposed, without deferring a decision at this COP, that the STRP be asked to study qualitative criteria for establishing regional groupings, with its results to be presented to COP8, thus not affecting the draft resolution in DOC. 15.1 at present. It was further proposed that the Neotropical region be accorded an additional alternate's place on the SC, in addition to the proposed two voting members, reflecting its three biogeographical regions.
50. Hungary noted that in the last sentence of ¶19 the words "and countries in transition", after "developing countries", had inadvertently been dropped and should be reinstated.
51. The President determined that, with the exception of the proposal of the Neotropics to be accorded an additional alternate's place and with no further comments emerging, the unbracketed passages of the draft resolution in DOC 15.1 have a consensus of approval, and he called for discussion of Option 1, i.e. the first alternatives of paragraphs 4 and 5 and Annex I, and Option 2, the second alternatives of paragraphs 4 and 5 and Annex I.
52. Germany, Uruguay, and Nicaragua expressed support for Option 1 on grounds of biogeographical criteria for grouping, and the Neotropical region requested that the name of Option 1's group 3 in paragraph 4 be changed back to "Neotropics". Malaysia, Iran, Syria, and Pakistan preferred Option 2 in conformity with UN practice and called for establishment of an open-ended Working Group to pursue the search for a consensus solution. The USA drew attention to two years of resource-consuming discussion with no progress toward consensus and called for a conclusion to the issue. Australia, Canada, and Norway expressed strong preferences for Option 1 on the ground that, though political criteria may serve the UN well, biogeographical, ecosystem, environmental values should be preferred as criteria for the Convention on Wetlands. Slovenia and The FYR of Macedonia also voiced support for Option 1.
53. Germany observed that, in order to avoid having to conduct the Convention's first vote, a last attempt at consensus should be tried. The Convention has important work to do and can afford no more time on political issues; the Convention's organization should be on environmental grounds only, and all Parties should be permitted to participate fully in Ramsar's work, with none isolated from full cooperation. Thus Germany tabled amendments to Option 1, ¶5, which might provide grounds for agreement.
54. Venezuela said that after two years of debate no further discussion would be fruitful and called for a vote between Options 1 and 2. Canada provided guidance on how such a vote should proceed, based upon Rules of Procedure 41 and 44. Egypt and Bangladesh, noting Rule 40's requirement that all efforts toward consensus should be exhausted before voting, called for informal focus group discussions of Germany's proposed amendment; Argentina, Ireland, and Syria agreed that Germany's proposal merited reflection, and asked for a little more time to see whether a vote could be avoided.
55. Iran urged that regional groups should have the right to endorse the requests of countries wishing membership in their regions should be added to the text of the German amendment, and felt that the amendment merited more work. Israel felt that the delegations calling for compromise did not really wish for compromise but rather wished



## Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the Oceania Region

62. The Deputy Secretary General presented the overview for the Oceania Region and Papua New Guinea was invited to comment on the overview.
63. Delegates making interventions on the overview again expressed their gratitude to the Government of Costa Rica for its kind hospitality, to the Ramsar Bureau for the preparation of the conference document and to the Deputy Secretary General for his comprehensive presentation.
64. Interventions were made by Australia, the Australian Wetland Alliance, the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and WWF, covering issues such as the designation of new Ramsar sites, the need for further progress to reverse the destruction of wetlands, the concern over the large number of sites in the region which ought to be listed on the Montreux Record, the need for SGF funded projects and other sources of funding to implement the Convention in some countries, the need to promote accession to the Convention of Small Island States, the desirability of establishing regional contacts with the territories administered by some Contracting Parties from outside the region, and the need for management plans for all Ramsar sites.
65. **Special Intervention 13:**  
**Ms Barbara Di Giovanni**, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, delivered a special message to COP7 from Mr Hamdallah Zedan, Acting Executive Secretary of the CBD.

## Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the Asian Region

66. The Regional Coordinator for Asia at the Ramsar Bureau presented the overview for the Asian region.
67. Delegates making interventions were generous in their thanks to the Government of Costa Rica for hosting and helping to organize COP7. They also recognized the considerable effort of the Ramsar Bureau in their preparations for the COP and broadly congratulated the Regional Coordinator for her comprehensive presentation.
68. Interventions were made by Bangladesh, China, Fujimae Association and Japan Wetland Action Network, Indonesia, Institute for Global Environment Strategies, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Wild Bird Society of Japan, and WWF covering such issues as designating more Ramsar sites, the need to recognize the vital ecological and economic importance of intertidal wetlands within the region, the pressure on Asian wetlands from expanding populations and development projects, the vital role NGOs and ordinary people can play in preventing wetland destruction, and the need to reinforce efforts to increase accession to the Convention.
69. A number of interventions made reference to the need for minor amendments to the Overview and these comments will be incorporated in the web site version of this document, as well as in any future copies that may be distributed.
70. Pakistan and Syria raised their objections to the inclusion of Israel in the overview for the Asia Region since the issue of Israel's inclusion in the Region had not been agreed upon.

71. Israel, noting the observation of Pakistan, referred the meeting to Ramsar DOC. 31 and stated that Israel was a member of the Asia Region and would remain so unless a decision to the contrary was taken by the COP.
72. The Vice President, Minister Kezimbira Miyingo of Uganda, introduced the afternoon session of the Third Plenary.
73. **Special Intervention 14:**  
**Minister Miguel Eduardo Araujo** of El Salvador made a special presentation on “Wetlands and Sustainable Development in Central America”.
74. **Special Intervention 15:**  
**Ms Eva Velasquez** presented the “Declaration of Central American People on Wetlands” with recommendations for the Convention.

#### **Agenda Item XI: Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties**

75. The Deputy Secretary General introduced DOC. 13.3 and the draft resolution in DOC. 15.12, and there were interventions from Peru, Denmark, Greece, the United Kingdom, Côte d’Ivoire, BirdLife International, WWF, Belgium and Austria. Greece expressed its appreciation for the contribution of the Ramsar Convention and the Montreux Record mechanism towards the significant enhancement of its policy on nature conservation and management.

#### **Agenda Item XII: Introduction of the Convention Work Plan and Bureau budget 2000-2002**

76. On DOC. 14 Annex 1, the Deputy Secretary General noted that the Work Plan is for the Convention, not just for the Bureau. After analyses of National Reports, the Bureau has suggested goals for implementation by the time of COP8.
77. The SG introduced DOC. 14 on the budget 2000-2002 and noted the Standing Committee’s proposed increase of 5%, 2%, 2% over 3 years. He pointed to the proposed increase of minimum dues to SFR 1000. He noted that Ramsar may be the only convention whose budget requires the cost of hosting the COP to be borne by the host Party; though Costa Rica has been the first developing country to bravely host a COP, the extreme difficulty of raising the necessary funds has been discouraging for the future. The US\$100 conference fee has helped defray the host’s costs, and several Parties and agencies have made voluntary contributions.
78. The USA, Chair of the Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance, listed the painful decisions that had to be made to reach the Standing Committee’s proposed budget. Though all Parties would like to see a significantly increased core budget, in these difficult times it will be necessary to seek innovative solutions. He urged adoption of the SC’s proposed budget.
79. WWF, Norway, BirdLife International, Venezuela, Ghana, The Kalahari Conservation Society, Belgium and the United Kingdom cited the proposed increase as quite low, given the work still remaining to be done.





86. This procedure, including the order of the voting, has been endorsed by the Conference Committee in its meeting of 13 May.
87. Syria requested to know what has become of its proposed amendment to Option 1, which was conveyed to the secretariat earlier the same morning, and he asked that more than 2 minutes be granted to explain each Party's voting intentions.
88. The President replied that Syria's proposal had been considered by the Conference Committee but that since it carried no consensus with it, it was decided, in conformity with the decision of the First Special Plenary, not to add it to the issues to be considered and voted upon. He offered to be flexible in allowing delegations to make cogent explanations of their voting intentions, but would retain the right to move the process along expeditiously if necessary.
89. The President offered to read Syria's proposal aloud to the meeting or project it by overheads in order to save the expense of distribution, though the decision that it not be considered would stand. Syria insisted that the proposed Syrian amendment should be distributed for consideration by all participants, who should be given enough time to digest it.
90. Venezuela, Iran, and Algeria voiced a preference for full consideration of Syria's proposal and questioned the President's ruling that it should not be considered. The President then ruled that the meeting would be suspended and asked the Secretariat to copy and distribute the proposal to all delegations. The President suspended the session for 15 minutes to do so.
91. The session resumed and Syria introduced its proposal by presenting it as an attempt to reach a compromise solution to what was described as a mistake by the Standing Committee and the Bureau that should now be corrected. The continued presence of Israel in the Asian region would paralyze that region's implementation of the Convention. Syria asked that its proposal be considered on an equal footing with other proposals already in process. Syria's proposal included the removal of Israel from the list of countries in the Asian region, and its placement in the European region, within the Annex of Option 1.
92. The President reiterated the plenary's decision on Tuesday that no further proposals would be considered unless consensus had been achieved. Malaysia, Pakistan, Morocco, Algeria, Indonesia, Venezuela, Jordan, Niger and Iran asked that the Syrian proposal should be considered, whilst Germany and Canada requested that the President abide by the decision of the plenary on Tuesday night. The President determined that a vote should be taken to learn whether the plenary wished to alter its decision in the case of Syria's proposal.
93. The President began the voting procedure on whether to consider Syria's proposal. In a point of order Syria called for a secret ballot in accordance with Rule 46. The President conducted a vote on whether or not a secret balloting should be conducted. As a result of the vote, 37 Parties voted in favour, 53 Parties against, and 10 Parties abstained.
94. The President resumed the voting procedure on whether or not to consider Syria's proposal and opened the floor for brief explanations of voting intentions. Malaysia observed that avenues of reaching consensus had not been exhausted and that the imposition of a decision on this issue by the COP7 was inappropriate, would create a

dangerous precedent and would not only be a divisive action but would make it impossible for the Asian region to meet. The representative of Syria said that the procedure being followed by the Convention was a mistake and was forcing the Convention to an impasse. He noted that the results of a vote would not count. It was the fact of having a vote at all that would be divisive, in which event the entire Convention would be the loser.

95. The President again resumed the voting procedure. In a point of order Syria called for a roll call vote. A roll call vote was taken in alphabetical English order, beginning with Belgium drawn by lot. Result of the vote on whether to consider Syria's proposal: 22 Parties voted in favour, 46 Parties voted against, 35 Parties abstained and 3 Parties did not participate. Therefore, the President concluded that the plenary would not consider Syria's proposal. He expressed his thanks to all delegations including Syria for their cooperation and understanding.
96. The Iranian delegate said that in order to facilitate the proceedings, he withdrew alternative ¶5.
97. The President called for taking action on ¶5 of Option 1 proposed by Germany on Tuesday. Since there was no objection, the amendments were adopted by consensus.
98. The President inquired whether it was possible to take a decision by consensus on Option 1 as amended.
99. Iran informed the meeting of its recent efforts, particularly with Germany and Syria, to reach a compromise solution and added that a compromise had been found. But all endeavors were blocked by one Contracting Party, thus causing disruption in the Ramsar family. He expressed that his delegation realized the fact that many Parties, as noted during Tuesday's Special Plenary Session, preferred Option 1. While thanking all Parties which supported Option 2, he withdrew alternative ¶4 and the alternative annex and explained that he did so in order to expedite the work of the Plenary. He also thanked the Parties which were involved in consultations and expressed regret that the Convention could not proceed with that solution.
100. The President announced that the draft resolution contained in DOC. 15.1, as amended, was adopted by consensus and the issue would not be reconsidered during COP7. He went on to say that on Monday 17 May and Tuesday 18 May the remaining draft resolutions would be presented for adoption by the COP7. The President thanked Iran for its cooperative gesture and called upon all Parties to continue to cooperate fully in the future. He called for final statements.
101. The Iranian delegate expressed that his delegation did not make objection to Option 1 in order to not break consensus. He also expressed regret that the issue had been concluded in this way and expressed that the COP7 had imposed one Party's membership to a regional group in a way that was unprecedented in other organizations. Iran felt that Israel had been assigned to the Asian region in a big mistake by the secretariat, thus transferring the Middle Eastern crisis into the Convention. That impaired the success of the Asian Regional Meeting held in February 1999, and Iran predicted many future problems as a result, including the paralysis of future meetings and programmes relating to the Asian region. He noted that this imposition had created a precedent which may later affect other regional groupings as well. Because of the political implications of Israel's presence in the Asian group, the Convention hereafter would face big challenges in that region.



108. The Deputy Secretary General reported on the five technical sessions undertaken on May 13, 14 and 15 which considered 13 of the 32 draft resolutions distributed to Contracting Parties in advance of the Conference.

#### **Agenda Item XVI: Appointment of the members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)**

109. The Plenary reviewed the draft resolution in DOC. 15.2 Rev. 1. Amendments were proposed by Uruguay (speaking on behalf of the Neotropical region), Norway and Canada.
110. The President, Mr Veit Koester invited discussion on the appointment of the Chair of STRP and it was agreed by consensus, with interventions from Venezuela, Sweden and Argentina, that the Chair should be elected by the STRP members.
111. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.2 Rev. 1 was adopted by consensus as amended.

#### **Agenda Item XVII: Adoption of Conference Resolutions and Recommendations**

112. The President asked the meeting to consider the draft resolution in DOC. 15.33 and the related DOC. 14 on the Work Plan. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.33 was adopted by consensus.
113. The Secretary General introduced the draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 on the budget. He reminded delegates of the informal Contact Group on budgetary matters set up during the Conference at the suggestion of Kenya and chaired by Ireland. There was an intervention by Ireland, who delivered a plea to the meeting to consider the proposal in the Discussion Document put forward by the majority of the members of the Contact Group representing an increase of 5% per year over the next three years. The President asked for, and received, confirmation from Ireland that the Discussion Document was a formal proposal.
114. There was an intervention from Uruguay, on behalf of the Neotropical Region, supporting the minimum annual contribution of SFR 1,000 suggested in the draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 and the President noted a consensus agreement on this matter from the meeting.
115. There were interventions giving support to the Contact Group proposal from Sweden, UK, Spain, Kenya, Belgium, Greece, Switzerland, Egypt, Philippines, Slovenia and Denmark.
116. There were interventions giving support to the Standing Committee proposal contained in DOC. 14 and the draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 from Germany, Uruguay (speaking on behalf of the Neotropical region), Syria, Netherlands, Canada, Brazil and the USA.
117. Australia asked for clarification on several matters of the budget and noted that it was still considering its support for the Standing Committee proposal. Austria's intervention concerning the effects of the Irish proposal on SGF was considered neutral.
118. Syria supported the minimum contribution proposal but expressed concern over the selective use of the UN system as a reference in DOC. 14. Since objection to the use of the UN system as a reference to Ramsar's documents related to Regional Categorization had been raised and supported by some delegations earlier in the proceedings, Syria considered that a double standard was being applied.

119. The President, following a suggestion from an intervention by Venezuela, recommended a period of time to help arrive at a consensus on the budget. He proposed an open-ended Contact Group over lunchtime, chaired by Ireland and with the presence of Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Philippines, and Slovenia, representing good coverage regionally as well as reflecting the breadth of opinions expressed during the interventions. He emphasized, however, that any Contracting Party was welcome to attend.
120. **Special Intervention 16:**  
**Madame Dominique Voynet**, Minister of Physical Planning and the Environment, France, delivered a statement to the plenary.
121. Ireland, reporting on the meeting of the contact group during the lunch period, said that though there was support for the 5-5-5% increase formula there was also significant opposition, and the following compromise had been reached based on the 5-2-2% increase option: the contribution of each Contracting Party to this budget will be in accordance with the scale of assessments for the contribution of Member States to the United Nations budget as approved by the UN General Assembly for 2000 (Annex II) and yet to be approved for the years 2001 and 2002, except in the case of Contracting Parties which, in applying the UN scale, would make annual contributions to the Convention Budget of less than SFR 1,000, in which case the annual contribution shall be this amount. For these Contracting Parties the difference between the assessed contribution according to the UN scale and the minimum threshold of SFR 1,000 shall be allocated toward funding the position of Development Assistance Officer (DAO) in the Ramsar Bureau; all other Contracting Parties will continue to be assessed in accordance with the UN scale of contributions as also indicated in Annex II. The Bureau, as human and financial resources allow, will endeavour to secure the additional resources needed in order to establish the post of Development Assistance Officer within the Secretariat, with the aim of mobilising resources to facilitate implementation of the Convention by developing countries and those with economies in transition.
122. Syria raised questions about the use of Convention funds for bureaucratic purposes rather than in the regions, and the Secretary General explained the purpose of the core budget for maintenance of the secretariat, and additional project funding in some detail. WWF raised questions about the relative change in the budget for the developing versus the developed countries.
123. The Secretary General welcomed the compromise solution but wished to record that the Bureau could not guarantee recruitment of a DAO for the amounts of money being discussed. Uganda suggested that the Bureau be instructed rather than urged to recruit a DAO.
124. Kenya wished to record its feeling that requiring further payments, because of the newly-adopted 1000SFr minimum, from Parties that have prepaid dues for several years could create problems for them, but agreed to do so for the good of the Convention.
125. Adoption of the draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 was postponed so that the Secretary General could supply text on the Irish 5-2-2 compromise and suggestions concerning recruitment of a DAO, but the other parts of the draft resolution were agreed to.

126. The session continued with the COP7 President in the chair. The following draft resolutions and recommendations were adopted by consensus: DOC. 15.3 concerning partnerships; DOC. 15.4 concerning synergies with other conventions; DOC. 15.5 on the Small Grants Fund; DOC. 15.6 on National Wetland Policies; DOC. 15.7 on laws and institutions; DOC. 15.9 on the Outreach Programme; DOC. 15.10 on Wetland Risk Assessment; and DOC. 15.11 on the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.8 on local communities and indigenous people was adopted by consensus, noting the statement by Chile, concerning paragraphs 4 and 12, that the participation of local communities and indigenous people in the activities developed at national level, should be inscribed within the framework of the National Wetlands Strategy, given priority to their insertion in the National Wetlands Committee.
127. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.12 on Ramsar sites was introduced by the Bureau.
128. A total of 17 countries announced further Ramsar site designations, which were incorporated in the draft resolution.
129. Chile questioned the goal in paragraph 19 of 75% of Ramsar sites with management plans and suggested that 50% might be more realistic, and it was urged that since the present figure was 44%, and the adopted Work Plan also urged 75%, the target figure should be retained. Chile agreed with the original proposal but wished its reservations to be recorded.
130. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.12, including DOC. 15.12.1, was adopted by consensus. Greece provided background on its recent efforts to fulfill earlier recommendations of the COP concerning its Montreux Record sites, three of which were proposed for removal by DOC. 15.12.1. BirdLife International and WWF International applauded the Greek government's openness and constructive use of the Montreux Record.
131. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.14 was adopted by consensus, as amended by IUCN with sponsorship from Australia and Norway and amendments from USA, Spain, and Venezuela.
132. WWF offered to contribute SFR 30,000 over the triennium and bilaterally support other SGF projects that fulfilled the objectives of its Living Waters Campaign.



India fully associated itself with the Turkish statement.

136. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.26, now merged with DOC. 15.27, was adopted by consensus as amended. As a consequence of these amendments, the draft resolution in DOC. 15.12 was further amended and the amendments adopted by consensus.
137. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.36, on the “Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention”, was adopted by consensus, with the clarification that Uruguay was no longer a sponsor of the resolution and Nicaragua had joined as a new sponsor. Noting the absence of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from this Conference, the Russian Federation, India, China and Armenia recorded their dissociation from the decision which they said had no practical utility and was politically motivated. Along with Zambia and Algeria, they noted that they would abstain in the event of a vote on the decision.

#### **Agenda Item XVIII: Election of the Contracting Parties that will serve on the Standing Committee**

138. Ghana, Malaysia, Hungary, Germany, USA, Uruguay and Papua New Guinea, reporting on behalf of their regions, proposed Togo, Algeria, Uganda, India, Japan, Norway, Sweden, France, Armenia, Mexico, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, and Australia for election to the Standing Committee for the next triennium and they were elected by acclamation, along with Costa Rica as Past Host of the Conference of the Parties.

#### **Agenda Item XIX: Date and venue of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties**

139. Following DOC. 22 and the formal offer by Spain to host COP8 issued during the Plenary on May 11, and noting that no other formal invitations had been made, the meeting accepted Spain’s offer by acclamation. The President noted that Spain would now be a voting member of the Standing Committee in its capacity as Next Host of the Conference of the Parties.

#### **Agenda Item XX: Any other business**

140. No other business items were introduced.

#### **Agenda Item XXI: Adoption of the Report of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties**

141. The Secretary General presented the Conference Report, noting the decision by the Conference Committee to produce an abbreviated Report in comparison with previous Conferences. The Report was adopted by consensus as amended.
142. **Special Intervention 18:**  
IUCN presented two murals, painted during the Conference, by six traditional painters from Lake Nicaragua. The painters were presented with Certificates of Appreciation by the President.



## **Agenda Item XXII: Close of Meeting**

143. Closing remarks were made by the Secretary General and also by Australia, USA, Morocco, Malaysia, Austria, and Uruguay on behalf of the regions, BirdLife International on behalf of the International Organization Partners, Japan Wetlands Action Network on behalf of the national NGOs, and Louise Lakos as out-going Chair of the Standing Committee. The President, Lic. Elizabeth Odio Benito, closed the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties with a statement on behalf of the Government of Costa Rica.



[Note: The Committee noted the late submission of credentials by Belgium and El Salvador; their credentials were accepted by the plenary (see Conference Report paragraph 82)]



<b>Resolution VII.20</b>	Priorities for wetland inventory	COP7 DOC. 15.21
<b>Resolution VII.21</b>	Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands	COP7 DOC. 15.22
<b>Resolution VII.22</b>	Collaborative structure for Mediterranean wetlands	COP7 DOC. 15.23
<b>Resolution VII.23</b>	Defining Ramsar site boundaries	COP7 DOC. 15.26
	Merged into Resolution VII.23	COP7 DOC. 15.27
<b>Resolution VII.24</b>	Compensation for lost wetland habitats and other functions	COP7 DOC. 15.28
<b>Resolution VII.25</b>	Measuring environmental quality in wetlands	COP7 DOC. 15.29
<b>Resolution VII.26</b>	Creation of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere	COP7 DOC. 15.30
	Merged into Resolution VII.12	COP7 DOC. 15.31
<b>Resolution VII.27</b>	Work Plan	COP7 DOC. 15.33
<b>Resolution VII.28</b>	Financial and Budgetary Matters	COP7 DOC. 15.34
<b>Resolution VII.29</b>	Thanks to the host	COP7 DOC. 15.35
<b>Resolution VII.30</b>	Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention	COP7 DOC. 15.36
<b>Recommendation 7.1</b>	A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands	COP7 DOC. 15.18
<b>Recommendation 7.2</b>	Small Island Developing States, island wetland ecosystems, and the Ramsar Convention	COP7 DOC. 15.24
<b>Recommendation 7.3</b>	Multilateral cooperation on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region	COP7 DOC. 15.25
<b>Recommendation 7.4</b>	The Wetlands for the Future Initiative	COP7 DOC. 15.32



City of Narashino  
Kushiro City

**Netherlands**  
Wetland Advisory and Training Centre / WATC  
- RIZA

## **Intergovernmental Organizations**

Autoridad Binacional Bolivia-Peru del Lago  
Titicaca  
Common Wadden Sea Secretariat  
Convention on Biological Diversity  
Convention on International Trade in  
Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and  
Flora (CITES)  
Convention on Migratory Species  
European Commission  
European Environment Agency

Food and Agriculture Organization of the  
United Nations (FAO)  
Global Environment Facility (GEF)  
Organization of American States (OAS)  
The World Bank  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization (UNESCO)  
United Nations Environment Programme  
(UNEP)  
World Heritage Centre

## **International Non-Governmental Organizations**

Asociación de Cooperación Rural en África y  
América Latina  
BirdLife International  
Caribbean Conservation Association  
Center for International Earth Science  
Information Network  
Ducks Unlimited  
Environmental Law Centre, IUCN  
Forest Peoples Programme  
Global Environment Centre  
International Environmental Protection  
Association

International Peat Society  
International Shrimp Action Network (ISA Net)  
IUCN - The World Conservation Union  
Oiseaux Migrateurs du Paléarctique occidental -  
OMPO  
Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat  
The Earth Council  
Wetlands International  
World Commission on Dams  
World Conservation Monitoring Centre  
World Water Council, World Water Vision Unit  
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

## **National Non-Governmental Organizations**

### **Argentina**

Fundación Ecoturismo Argentina (FUNECO)  
Fundación PROTEGER  
Fundación RIE - Red Informática Ecologista

### **Australia**

Australian Marine Conservation Society  
Australian Wetlands Alliance  
Shortland Wetlands Centre  
Wildlife Preservation Society (Capricornia  
Branch)

### **Austria**

BirdLife Austria

### **Belize**

Belize Audubon Society

### **Botswana**

Kalahari Conservation Society

### **Bulgaria**

Foundation "Le Balkan"

### **Chile**

Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Fauna y  
Flora

**Colombia**

Instituto de Investigaciones Ambientales del  
Pacífico

**Ecuador**

FUNDECOL

**France**

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux  
Société Nationale de Protection de la Nature  
(SNPN)

**Greece**

Society for the Protection of Prespa

**India**

Centre for Built Environment  
Indian Environmental Society

**Japan**

Ecosystem Conservation Society - Kochi  
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies  
International Conference for Country Life  
Japanese Association for Wild Geese Protection  
Japanese Wetlands Action Network  
Kabukuri Wetlands Club  
Kushiro International Wetland Centre  
Kyushu-Ryukyu Wetlands Action Network in  
Japan  
Miyagi Prefectural Izunuma-Uchinuma  
Environmental Foundation  
Nakaikemi Marsh Trust Japan (NMTJ-JAWAN)  
Ramsar Center Japan  
Save Fujimae Association  
Save Isahaya Tidal Flat

**Kazakhstan**

Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Committee  
Public Centre on Biodiversity in Kazakhstan

**Kenya**

Lake Naivasha Riparian Association

**Mexico**

Biocenosis, A.C.  
Patronato de la Reserva Estatal de El Palmar

**Nigeria**

Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF)

**Pakistan**

The Scientific & Cultural Society of Pakistan

**Panama**

Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento

Indígena

**Peru**

Centro de Datos para la Conservación - CDC-  
UNALM  
Comité de Vecinos en Defensa de las Áreas  
Verdes de la Urbización  
Museo de Historia Natural  
PRODENA, Arequipa  
Programa de Humedales del Perú

**Republic of Korea**

Chonbuk Korean Federation for Environmental  
Movement  
Green Korea United  
Institute of East Cholla Province Community  
Studies  
Korea Research Institute for Human  
Settlements  
Korean Wetland Center  
Korean Wetlands Alliance  
Masan-changwon Korean Federation For  
Environmental Movement  
Mokpo Korean Federation for Environmental  
Movement  
Pusan Korean Federation for Environmental  
Movement  
The Korea Wetlands Conservation Society  
Tidal Flat Conservation Committee - KFEM  
**South Africa**  
Wildlife Environment Society of South Africa

**Spain**

Sede para el Estudio de las Zonas Húmedas  
Mediterráneas (SEHUMED)  
SEO/BirdLife España

**Thailand**

Yadfon (Raindrop) Association

**Turkey**

Society for the Protection of Nature

**Uganda**

The East Africa Natural History Society

**United Kingdom**

British Virgin Islands National Parks Trust  
UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum  
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

**United States of America**

Caddo Lake Institute, Inc.  
Conservation Treaty Support Fund  
Earth Island Institute  
Montana State University, The Watercourse



Program  
Sierra Club

Terrene Institute  
World Resources Institute



DOC. 15.5	Draft Resolution on Critical evaluation of the Convention's Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and its future operations
DOC. 15.6	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies
DOC. 15.7	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands
DOC. 15.8	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for establishing participatory processes to involve local communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands
DOC. 15.9	Draft Resolution on The Ramsar Convention's Outreach Programme, 1999-2002
DOC. 15.10	Draft Resolution on Wetland Risk Assessment Framework
DOC. 15.11	Draft Resolution on Strategic framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance
DOC. 15.12	Draft Resolution on The sites in the Ramsar List: official descriptions, conservation status and management planning, including the situation of particular sites in the territory of specific Contracting Parties
DOC. 15.13	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for identifying and designating karst and other subterranean hydrological systems as Wetlands of International Importance
DOC. 15.14	Draft Resolution on Invasive species and wetlands
DOC. 15.15	Draft Resolution on Incentive measures to encourage the application of the Wise Use Principles
DOC. 15.16	Draft Resolution on The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment: strategic, environmental and social
DOC. 15.17	Draft Resolution on Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use
DOC. 15.18	Draft Resolution on A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands
DOC. 15.19	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management
DOC. 15.20	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for international cooperation under the Convention
DOC. 15.21	Draft Resolution on Priorities for wetland inventory
DOC. 15.22	Draft Resolution on Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands
DOC. 15.23	Draft Resolution on Collaborative structure for Mediterranean wetlands
DOC. 15.24	Draft Resolution on Small Island Developing States and the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 15.25	Draft Resolution on Multilateral cooperation on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region
DOC. 15.26	Draft Resolution on Defining Ramsar site boundaries
DOC. 15.27	Draft Resolution on Interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2 of the Convention
DOC. 15.28	Draft Resolution on Compensation on wetland habitats
DOC. 15.29	Draft Resolution on Measuring water quality in wetlands
DOC. 15.30	Draft Resolution on Creation of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere
DOC. 15.31	Draft Resolution on Greek Ramsar sites
DOC. 15.32	Draft Resolution on The Wetlands for the Future Initiative
DOC. 16.2	Integrating wetlands conservation and wise use into river basin management [See DOC. 15.19]
DOC. 16.4	Defining Ramsar's role in the response to the global water crisis
DOC. 17.1	Taking a more systematic approach to identifying Wetlands of International Importance
DOC. 17.2	Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies
DOC. 17.3	Reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands
DOC. 17.4	Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use
DOC. 18.1	Participatory processes to involve local communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands
DOC. 18.2	Promoting participatory wetland and river basin management through education and understanding
DOC. 18.3	Incentive measures to encourage the application of the Ramsar Convention's wise use principles
DOC. 19.1	The Ramsar Convention and Impact Assessment

DOC. 19.2	Wetland Risk Assessment Framework
DOC. 19.3	Global review of wetland resources, and priorities for wetland inventory
DOC. 19.4	Applications of a user-friendly GIS to wetland conservation at the site level
DOC. 20.1	Shared wetlands and river basins of the world
DOC. 20.2	International cooperation through River Basin Commissions
DOC. 20.3	Guidelines for international cooperation under the Convention - Part I: Shared wetlands, river basins, and species
DOC. 20.4	International cooperation under the Convention - Part II: Mobilising financial support from bilateral and multilateral donors for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 21	Membership of the next Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
DOC. 22	Date and venue of the next ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties
DOC. 23	The Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 24	Invasive species and wetlands
DOC. 25	The tools for implementing the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 26	Status of projects managed by the Ramsar Bureau in the period 1 January 1996 - 31 December 1998
DOC. 28	Payment of Contracting Parties' contributions to the core budget at 31 March 1999
DOC. 29	Programme and operations of the Technical Sessions
DOC. 30	The inclusion of Israel in the Asia Region under the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 31	Letter from the Permanent Mission of Israel

### **Documents tabled at the Conference**

DOC. 1 Rev. 2	Revised Annotated Agenda and Programme
DOC. 3	Admission of Observers
DOC. 15.6 Add. to the Annex	Update-to-date statistics concerning the status of preparation and implementation of National Wetland Policies, as reflected in National Reports
DOC. 15.33	Draft Resolution on The Convention Work Plan 2000-2002
DOC. 15.34	Draft Resolution on Financial and Budgetary Matters
DOC. 15.35	Draft Resolution on Thanks to the Host Country
DOC. 15.36	Draft Resolution on the Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 16.1	The roles of wetlands in the water cycle
DOC. 16.3	Wetlands and National Water Policy formulation
DOC. 16.5	Measures for China's wetland rehabilitation after flooding in 1998
DOC. 27	Descriptive List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List)
DOC. 32	Small Grants Fund – 1999