

Notification 1998/2

Annual Contributions -- Revised Invoice

The Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) presents its compliments and has the honour to refer to the following:

On 20 November 1997, under cover of Diplomatic Note 8/1997, the Bureau forwarded invoices for national contributions to the Convention budget for 1998. Reference was made to the fact that annual contributions are calculated on the basis of the percentage contributions paid by Member States to the UN budget. In that Diplomatic Note, it was indicated that the invoices had been prepared using the 1997 Scale of Assessments of the Apportionment of the Expenses of the United Nations since the one to be used for 1998 had not at that time been approved by the UN General Assembly.

The Bureau has now received the 1998 scale approved by the UN General Assembly on 22 December 1997 and has found that there have been major changes, which has resulted in the need for all Ramsar invoices to be reissued. Under the circumstances the Bureau encloses a replacement invoice for 1998. If Contracting Parties have already settled their dues for this year, the invoice duly reflects the payment and indicates the balance owing or the amount of overpayment. Where overpayments have occurred on the basis of the 1997 scale of contributions, Contracting Parties are invited to donate these as a 'voluntary contribution' to the work of the Convention.

The minimum amount invoiced for 1998 with Diplomatic Note 8/1997 on the basis of the 1997 UN scale was SFR 288 -- with the revised 1998 scale, this figure has been reduced in some cases to SFR 28. Since the Bureau has calculated that it costs at least SFR 100 per country to invoice and process payments, the Bureau has received approval from the Chair of the Ramsar Standing Committee's Subgroup on Finance to invite those countries concerned to consider paying at the rate of SFR 288 as invoiced in November 1997. The Bureau very much hopes that this will be acceptable and consequently is not forwarding a revised invoice to those countries.

The Bureau regrets any inconvenience caused by issuing new invoices, but never in the past has it known the UN percentages to change so drastically from one year to the next, affecting all Parties.

In line with previous practice and the decision of the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the invoices have been prepared in Swiss francs. Reflecting decision

17.5 of the Standing Committee, Contracting Parties are therefore urged, whenever possible, to pay in Swiss francs. All Contracting Parties are encouraged to make their contributions promptly for the calendar year 1998.

Contracting Parties are kindly asked to transfer their contributions to the Convention account with the Union de Banques Suisses in Lausanne, Switzerland:

Ramsar/IUCN Account Nos: 333.603.01.C. (SFR) or 333.603.60.R. (US\$).

The Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands respectfully requests that the content of the present note be communicated to the competent national authorities and avails itself of this opportunity to renew the assurance of its highest consideration.

Gland, 12 February 1998