

Resolution VII.9



“People and Wetlands: The Vital Link”
**7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999**

The Convention’s Outreach Programme 1999-2002

Actions to promote communication, education and public awareness to support implementation of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

1. RECALLING Resolution VI.19 which called for a concerted programme of education and public awareness *“to increase the knowledge and understanding of wetland values and benefits and so develop action towards the conservation and sustainable management of wetland resources”*;
2. NOTING General Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention which describes a range of actions designed to allow the Convention *“to raise awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels”*;
3. RECOGNISING the importance of communication, education and public awareness as central elements of implementing the Ramsar Convention and its Strategic Plan;
4. EXPRESSING THANKS to the participants in the workshop convened by the Ramsar Bureau in September 1998 as follows: Commission on Communication and Education of IUCN - The World Conservation Union; Ghana Wildlife Society; Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN); Water Planet; Water Watch Asia; Watercourse and Project WET; Waterwatch Australia; Wetlands International Specialist Group on Education and Public Awareness; Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust; and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), who contributed significantly to the development of the Convention’s Outreach Programme;
5. FURTHER NOTING that this Conference, in Technical Session III, has considered and discussed in detail the Convention’s Outreach Programme 1999-2002;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. ADOPTS the Convention’s Outreach Programme 1999-2002 as annexed to this Resolution to provide guidance to Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Bureau, the Convention’s International Organization Partners, local stakeholders and others in the development of appropriate communication, education and public awareness actions to support the implementation of the Convention at the international, regional, national and local levels;
7. REQUESTS all Contracting Parties, in accordance with the Outreach Programme, to nominate, by 31 December 1999, suitable Government and Non-government Focal Points for Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) to undertake the functions therein specified;

8. FURTHER REQUESTS that the names and contact details for these Focal Points be provided to the Ramsar Bureau as soon as possible in order to create a global network of experts in this field to advance the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources;
9. URGES, as suggested in the Outreach Programme, that each Contracting Party establish appropriately constituted Task Forces, where no mechanism exists for this purpose (e.g. National Ramsar Committees), to undertake a review of national needs, capacities and opportunities in the field of wetland CEPA, and based on this to formulate their National Wetland CEPA Action Plans for priority activities which consider the international, regional, national and local needs;
10. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to seek to have their National Wetland CEPA Action Plans in place by 31 December 2000, and to provide copies of these to the Ramsar Bureau to make available to other Contracting Parties and interested organizations and persons;
11. STRONGLY URGES each Contracting Party to seek to develop and implement their National Wetland CEPA Action Plans as integrated components of their broader environment, biodiversity, wetland and water management policy instruments and programmes, to ensure that communication, education and community awareness are recognised as underpinning the effective delivery of these activities;
12. WARMLY INVITES relevant global programmes which fill the criteria for official International Organization Partners of the Ramsar Convention as per Resolution VII.3 to facilitate future working partnerships and cooperation in advancing implementation of this Outreach Programme;
13. DIRECTS the Ramsar Bureau, as funds and human resources allow, using information and materials provided to it by the national Focal Points for Wetland CEPA in each Contracting Party, to establish as part of the Convention's Web site a clearing-house for information relating to wetland CEPA;
14. NOTES and ENDORSES the targets set by the Outreach Programme in terms of using the full potential of the Internet and e-mail to assist with wetland CEPA activities and general implementation of the Ramsar Convention, namely that by the year 2000 every Administrative Authority of the Convention should have Internet access and e-mail facilities and then to progressively link these Administrative Authorities with Ramsar site managers, the National Wetland CEPA Focal Points and those facilities dedicated to promoting environmental and wetland education and awareness raising;
15. WELCOMES the growing celebration of World Wetlands Day and Week in a large number of countries, and URGES Contracting Parties to continue, or to begin to use this occasion to bring attention to their achievements and continuing challenges in wetland conservation and wise use;
16. DRAWS ATTENTION to the section of the Outreach Programme which considers formal education and training initiatives, and ENCOURAGES the Administrative Authorities in each Contracting Party to review this in partnership with the relevant Ministry, and to seek participation on their Wetland CEPA Task Forces of a representative from this Ministry and other appropriate expert bodies and organizations;

17. REITERATES ITS STRONG SUPPORT for the Wetlands Link International initiative, a cornerstone of the Outreach Programme, EXPRESSES CONCERN for the lack of significant support for this Programme in the past, and URGES Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners of the Convention, regional and national NGOs, and potential sponsors to reassess their priorities in an effort to mobilise resources to see this initiative fulfil its potential;
18. CALLS UPON multilateral and bilateral donors, and private sector sponsors to recognise the value and importance of supporting activities directed at promoting enhanced communication, education and public awareness, and the recovery, preservation and dissemination, where appropriate, of traditional knowledge and skills relating to wetlands, and to allocate funds specifically for the preparation of National Wetland CEPA Action Plans.*

* In this context, also note paragraph 18 of Resolution VII.28 on Financial and Budgetary Matters, which reads: “DECIDES to establish a Voluntary Fund for the Convention’s Outreach Programme, REQUESTS the Standing Committee to prepare and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Fund at its annual meeting in 1999; and INVITES Contracting Parties, NGOs, foundations, the private sector and other institutions to contribute to the Fund.”

Annex

The Convention's Outreach Programme - 1999-2002

Actions to promote communication, education and public awareness to support implementation of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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Goals and rationale of the Outreach Programme

1. The Outreach Programme is a direct response to General Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention, as adopted at the 6th Conference of the Contracting Parties in 1996. Through its three Operational Objectives, General Objective 3, describes a range of actions designed to allow the Convention:

“To raise awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels”.

2. The three Operational Objectives under General Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan refer to international and national programmes of education and public awareness and the communications activities of the Convention and the Ramsar Bureau. In the Outreach Programme described herein, the same three areas of activity are considered in an integrated way and a model is presented to assist Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Bureau, the Convention’s International Organization Partners, local people and others to undertake appropriate actions to reach their respective priority target groups.

Defining the challenge

3. The challenge for the Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Bureau, the Convention’s International Organization Partners, local people and others is to develop effective communication in order to change those practices that act against wetland conservation and the wise use of wetland resources. To be effective, the Contracting Parties need to engage stakeholders in defining the issues and possible solutions and to use communication and education as tools appropriately linked to legal and economic instruments to bring about change. This means that communication should form a central part of implementing the Ramsar Convention by each Contracting Party, supported by the Ramsar Bureau and the International Organization Partners of the Convention.

Goals

4. The goals of the Outreach Programme are the same as those given with the respective Operational Objectives contained in General Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention as follows:
 - i. Operational Objective 3.1: “To support and assist in implementing, in cooperation with partners and other institutions, an international programme of Education and Public Awareness (EPA) on wetlands, their functions and values, designed to promote national EPA programmes.”
 - ii. Operational Objective 3.2: “To develop and encourage national programmes of EPA on wetlands, targeted at a wide range of people, including key decision-makers, people living in and around wetlands, other wetland users, and the public at large.”
 - iii. Operational Objective 3.3: “To improve the Ramsar Bureau’s communications activities and to develop a Convention Communications Strategy, capable of further promoting the Convention and its wider application, and of raising awareness of wetland values and functions.”

Rationale for the Outreach Programme

5. The Convention on Wetlands needs an Outreach Programme in order to:
 - i. generate a greater awareness among people about the functions, services and values of wetlands so they are perceived as important assets of the natural infrastructure of each country;
 - ii. motivate people to care about wetlands so that they become involved in policy formulation and hands-on planning and management of wetlands. This is the key to encouraging those behaviours that impact positively on wetlands and lead to the sustainable use of the resource;
 - iii. build support for wetland conservation and wise use amongst policy makers, the private sector and all sectors of society - the Ramsar Convention's constituency.
6. Without communication, the Contracting Parties and the Convention risk witnessing continuing conflicts over wetland management and ongoing degradation and loss of wetlands, and their functions, services and values.
7. Wetlands are vital for sustaining human life and must be managed accordingly. Communication is the link from science and ecology to people's social and economic reality. Communication supplies the oil for the implementation of the Convention's 'tools', providing the information needed by the Contracting Parties and its supporters to see wetland conservation and wise use implemented.

About the Outreach Programme

8. The specific actions described in the following sections are not intended to be exclusive. A key to successful communication is being clear about the issue, the particular circumstances of the people involved, the barriers to changing harmful practices, and developing messages and means to transmit them to suit the circumstances. This Programme should be viewed as providing a framework for actions which can help to guide activities undertaken by interested people and organizations at all levels and all over the world.
9. It is not the intention of this Programme to be prescriptive or comprehensive; it aims merely to provide a range of suggestions and options for actions which may or may not suit all situations or contexts. Overall, the Outreach Programme is intended to assist with putting in place an appropriate framework for actions in the communication, education and public awareness domain that will facilitate the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands.

Identifying the target groups

10. There are a large number of target groups for this Outreach Programme which fall within the broadest category of the general community or civil society. To assist Contracting Parties and others using this Programme to decide on the actions they will take, Appendix I describes 27 subgroups of civil society which have been identified as being those people who can make a significant and immediate difference in the status and long-term

sustainability of wetlands. In developing international, regional, national or local programmes of action based on this Outreach Programme, Contracting Parties and others are urged to take Appendix I into consideration for their own situations in determining the highest priority target groups.

The Actors

11. A fundamental assumption of the Outreach Programme is that as a consequence of the actions taken in response to it, there will be an increasing number of “actors” who become agents or ambassadors for the Convention on Wetlands and the principles it seeks to have applied. Support for the Outreach Programme should therefore be seen as an investment which aims to educate decision-makers and mobilise local scale actions directed at achieving the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
12. This section recognises that at the outset it is essential to identify the primary actors who will lead the processes of communication, education and public awareness - those people and organizations that must take a primary responsibility for designing and implementing action programmes suited to the regional, national or local situations and priority target groups.
13. **Contracting Parties.** The designated Administrative Authority of the Ramsar Convention in each Contracting Party has a responsibility to show leadership in promoting and undertaking wetland communication, education and public awareness (Wetland CEPA) activities at the national, and as appropriate, international, regional and local levels. Where the Administrative Authority itself does not have the expertise to take on such a role, the training of personnel in Wetland CEPA is recommended (paragraphs 44-46), or alternatively, working in partnership with other Ministries or organizations with personnel who possess these skills is encouraged.
14. Irrespective of the approach taken with respect to reviewing needs, capacities and opportunities as suggested by the Outreach Programme, each Contracting Party is invited to nominate a National Focal Point for Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (Wetland CEPA) in order to have an identified expert leader of the actions to be taken.
15. **The Convention secretariat.** The Ramsar Bureau will continue to play the role of facilitator in Wetland CEPA. The following section of this document outlines the major ongoing and proposed actions which the Ramsar Bureau will undertake to assist the implementation of the Outreach Programme at all levels. Among these actions is the recognised need for the Ramsar Bureau to work closely with the International Organization Partners of the Convention to promote the availability of their resources and expertise to the Administrative Authorities of the Convention.
16. **International Organization Partners of the Convention.** The Convention has a number of official International Organization Partners: BirdLife International, IUCN - the World Conservation Union, Wetlands International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). These organizations already offer to the Convention considerable resources and expertise to assist Contracting Parties and others with developing more strategic approaches to Wetland CEPA. The following section examines some ways for Contracting

Parties to work more with these International Partners in pursuing their aspirations in the CEPA area.

17. The 7th Conference of the Parties has adopted Resolution VII.3 adopting criteria and guidelines for the acceptance of further official International Organization Partners. It is hoped that a number of other organizations with expertise in the area of Wetland CEPA will seek official Partner status of the Convention to allow for enhanced cooperation and partnership in the future.
18. **Regional and national non-governmental organizations.** As with International Organization Partners, key actors in developing and implementing Wetland CEPA Action Plans are the regional and national non-governmental organizations with expertise in these areas. In recognition of this, in the following section Contracting Parties are urged to identify a suitable expert from a non-governmental organization to work in partnership with the governmental Wetland CEPA Focal Point in undertaking an action plan (see paragraph 14 above).
19. **Local stakeholders.** Perhaps the key actors are those people at the local level who fall within the category of stakeholders - people whose lives and livelihoods are determined, at least in part, by what happens at their local wetland(s). Under any Wetland CEPA Action Plan, assisting these local people to fully appreciate their wetland(s) and to raise the awareness and understanding of the importance of the wetland resource among others from outside the local community is essential. If these wetland “managers” fail to appreciate the functions, services and values provided by their wetland(s), then the efforts of governments and non-government organizations will struggle to have impact. Local stewardship, based on understanding and appreciation, is vital.
20. **Donor agencies and sponsors.** For many countries, and especially the developing countries and those in economic transition, an impediment to putting Wetland CEPA Action Plans in place is likely to be the lack of resources and expertise. It is therefore important that from the earliest stages of planning the Wetland CEPA Action Plans (paragraphs 25-33) that these Contracting Parties consult potential funding sources and work with them to produce projects likely to gain support. These supporters may be the traditional multilateral and bilateral donor agencies for the developing and transition countries, but consideration should also be given to inviting private sector sponsors. A good example of that is the current partnership project in which the Ramsar Bureau is engaged with the private sector Danone Group and several government agencies from France. This three-year programme of actions directed at the theme of “Caring for water resources and water quality” is allowing funds to be directed to six themes of action under the Ramsar Convention, ranging from site networks for migratory species to training, water and human health projects, and a range of communication and awareness raising activities. This cooperative project provides an ideal model for national programmes as well.

Tools and frameworks for action

21. This section of the Outreach Programme provides a broad framework or model for the development of Wetland CEPA Action Plans. These plans should be developed for application at the international, regional, national and local levels. They may be developed by Contracting Parties working as international or regional partners, through national

programmes developed jointly by the Ramsar Administrative Authority and non-government organizations, through to local scale action plans formulated and implemented by local stakeholders for local needs. It is hoped that all types of Wetland CEPA Action Plan will result from the adoption and application of the Outreach Programme. What follows is intended to offer suggestions for how to go about developing an appropriately targeted action plan for CEPA to promote wetland conservation and wise use.

Reviewing needs, capacities and opportunities

22. The starting point suggested is a review of the current needs, capacities and opportunities in the area of Wetland CEPA. This is itself no small undertaking if it is to be comprehensive and to provide a clear picture of where current strengths and weaknesses lie in this regard. The following offers a framework for undertaking such reviews leading to the development of an Action Plan at each level:
 - a. **Appointment of National Government Focal Point** - As mentioned in paragraph 14 above, each Contracting Party is invited to nominate a National Focal Point for Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (Wetland CEPA) , and to advise the Ramsar Bureau of the person fulfilling this role and his/her contacts details. This person should be an expert in the area of Wetland CEPA from the Ramsar Administrative Authority, where they are available, or might alternatively be from another appropriate government agency. His or her role is to be the identified leader and contact point for Wetland CEPA activities relating to wetlands nationally, as well as within the region and internationally.
 - b. **Appointment of National Non-government Focal Point** - Recognising the major role that non-government organizations play or can play in Wetland CEPA activities, each Contracting Party is also encouraged to invite a suitable individual from an international, regional or national NGO to be the Non-government Focal Point for Wetland CEPA activities and to work with the Government-based Focal Point in progressing the review of needs, capacities and opportunities, and subsequent plans of action.
 - c. **Build a global network of Focal Points** - These Focal Points are expected to form part of a global network of experts to share information, promote the dissemination of resource material and support the development or expansion of programmes which can provide opportunities for individual, group and community participation in wetland and water resource management. These issues are considered in more detail in the following paragraphs.
 - d. **Integrate Wetland CEPA into the business of National Wetland or Biodiversity Committees** - In order to promote communication, education and public awareness activities, it is advisable that the National Focal Points are members, or permanent observers, on the national committees charged with the development and implementation of policy instruments such as national wetland policies, biodiversity strategies, and water policies where they exist. Such membership will also assist greatly with the review of capacities and options.
 - e. **Establish a Wetland CEPA Task Force** - Further, if no other mechanisms exist for this purpose, the establishment of a small task force is recommended, to undertake the review of needs and options and to set priorities based on these

conclusions. At the very least this task force should include the Government and Non-government Focal Points referred to in paragraphs 22 a) and b) above, as well key representatives of the five groups of “actors” described in paragraphs 13-20, wherever possible. From within the Government it should include at least representatives of the Ministries which deal with matters relating to environment and conservation, water resource management and education. Depending on the primary threats to wetlands within the region, country or local setting, it may also be wise to include representatives of those Ministries responsible for primary production/ agriculture and tourism.

- f. **Multi-level framework for Wetland CEPA review** - The scope of the review of capacities and opportunities should be comprehensive, including at least the areas of activity considered in paragraphs 25 onwards, namely, communication between the actors; campaigns to raise awareness and promote action; sharing of resource materials and knowledge; formal education and training opportunities and the curricula of these; and the roles being played by dedicated centres for environmental education and awareness raising. In addition, it may be advisable to consider the review at the various levels - international, regional, national and local - to establish where activities are under way, or where there exists potential for them to be fostered or built upon. Consideration of these areas will give a clearer indication of the possible scope available at each level.
- g. **Action Plan formulation** - Under the Outreach Programme, each Contracting Party is encouraged to complete its review of Wetland CEPA capacities and options by 30 June 2000 at the latest. The Ramsar Bureau will facilitate these reviews by preparing a questionnaire for use by the Wetland CEPA review task forces and National Focal Points. Based on the findings and conclusions of this review, the Wetland CEPA Focal Points and Task Forces are expected to prepare for consideration by the Ramsar Administrative Authority within their countries a Wetland CEPA Action Plan which provides guidance on the highest priority actions. This advice should be provided to the Administrative Authority before 31 December 2000 and copied to the Ramsar Convention Bureau to allow the Bureau to offer advice and assistance as appropriate.

Action planning process

- 23. **Identify threats at all levels** - Paragraph 22 above sets out a framework for undertaking a review of the capacities and opportunities for Wetland CEPA which is designed to result in an Action Plan. Such a Plan needs to be tailored to the needs of each country, and for each level - international, regional, national and local. One approach to consider in drawing up such an Action Plan is that of threat analysis in order to establish which actions occurring within a country are resulting in the greatest losses or degradation of wetlands. Is it pollution impacts, direct conversion to other uses or water shortages, for example? This approach can help to identify those targets groups (refer to Appendix I) for highest priority attention.
- 24. **Identify most cost-effective actions** - Another approach is to consider the most cost-effective actions that can be taken. For example, one key question may be, is it a better use of scarce resources to target local stakeholders or political representatives and high level decision-makers? The first may offer longer term, local results while the second group usually make decisions which have broader implications. It is the role of the National Focal

Points and Wetland CEPA Task Force, or other appropriate mechanism, to advise the Administrative Authority on the priority target groups and how best to communicate with them to ensure their behaviours are acting in support of wetland conservation and wise use.

Communication among the actors

25. **Establish the strengths and weaknesses in communication** - A priority within the review of capacities and opportunities described in paragraph 22 above should be to establish the level, type and effectiveness of communication between the various actors identified in paragraphs 13-20 above and the target groups identified in Appendix I. This should help to show where communication is not occurring, and alternatively where it is occurring and needs to be retained or enhanced. In this analysis it may be useful first to establish the priority target groups (refer to paragraph 24 above). As an example, do the persons responsible for managing each Ramsar-listed wetland within the country have direct communication with one another, with the Administrative Authority, with the managers of other Ramsar sites used by the same migratory species, and direct access to the Ramsar Bureau's Wise Use Resource Library? Or do the officials in every relevant government Ministry have copies of the Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan and access to the more detailed information about the Convention available on the Convention's Web site?
26. **Define the information and training needs** - The review of communications should consider the information requirements of each target group - meaning the information which will allow them to behave as the Convention would encourage (refer to Appendix I) - to establish where that information or advice should or could come from, and how to make the connection between the providers and those who need the information or training. This process will show where communication breakdowns at present are directly inhibiting the implementation of the Convention. It is these that the Wetland CEPA Action Plan should aim to address.
27. **Locate sources of expert information and training** - An important element of examining communications is also to establish the sources of information or training which can provide opportunities for increasing the capacities in this area. In this regard, contact with the Convention's International Organization Partners and the Ramsar Bureau may assist. Alternatively, those countries that have extensive resource materials and a variety of training options available are urged through the Outreach Programme (refer to paragraphs 39-43 below) to advertise the availability of these and make access to them simpler. Facilitating the sharing of expertise and knowledge is the central element of the Wetland CEPA Action Plan. It is expected that the Wetland CEPA National Focal Points will seek advice and assistance from their counterparts in other countries in locating suitable sources of resource materials and training. The Ramsar Bureau's Directory of Wetland Management Training Opportunities will also assist in this area (refer to paragraphs 44-46).
28. **Using the full potential of the Internet and e-mail** - With the advent of the information superhighway, the ways of communicating are rapidly being transformed, and under the Convention's Outreach Programme this should be anticipated and accommodated within Wetland CEPA Action Plans. The Bureau of the Convention has a well-developed World Wide Web site and increasingly conducts its day-to-day business through electronic mail. A target under the Outreach Programme is to have e-mail contact with the Administrative Authorities in every Ramsar Contracting Party by the year 2000.

This target also includes e-mail contact with the designated National Focal Points for Wetland CEPA, and these same individuals should also have access to the Convention's Web site. The Ramsar Bureau will continue to develop the Convention Web site and add resource materials to ensure that it remains the centrepiece of this Outreach Programme.

29. **Create a global Ramsar e-mail network** - The target to follow those described above is to progressively develop Internet access, and to have e-mail links between the Ramsar Administrative Authorities, the National Wetland CEPA Focal Points, the Ramsar site managers and those facilities dedicated to environmental education and awareness raising, including local communities and indigenous people (refer to paragraphs 47-49). This communication network should provide the framework of a global Ramsar electronic network for sharing knowledge and information. Within national Wetland CEPA Action Plans, and also those at other levels of action, there should be a forward plan and vision to equip the key people with Internet access and e-mail capacity.
30. **Continue and increase official communications between the Ramsar Bureau and the Ramsar Administrative Authorities** - In addition to the Web site, the Bureau maintains the "Ramsar Exchange" intended for official communication between the Ramsar Bureau and the Administrative Authorities and amongst the Administrative Authorities themselves. This exchange operates in three (separate) language sections (English, French and Spanish) and includes all Administrative Authorities for which the Ramsar Bureau has e-mail addresses. There are also separate lists, with similar purposes, for the members of the Standing Committee and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel. To expand this communication service further, the Ramsar Bureau will establish a separate Ramsar Exchange section for the National Focal Points for Wetland CEPA. Within national Wetland CEPA Action Plans, it should be a priority to have the key people operating within the appropriate Ramsar Exchange.
31. **Expand the Ramsar Forum** - The Convention Bureau also manages an open e-mail dialogue area for the public, the Ramsar Forum, which in late 1998 had 540 members drawn from organizations, academic institutions, government and intergovernmental institutions and citizens around the world. Approximately 100 substantial messages per month are posted there, comprising (in addition to the Ramsar Bureau's announcements) technical queries and calls for assistance, conservation alerts, and announcements from other groups about meetings, etc. The Forum provides a valuable service and has increased the number of groups connected to the Convention and involved in wetland issues. Within national Wetland CEPA Action Plans a priority should be to have key national and local people participating as part of the Ramsar Forum.
32. **Links to Contracting Party and other Web sites** - Consistent with its Memorandum of Cooperation and Joint Work Programme with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention also supports the long-term vision of the Clearing-house Mechanism under that Convention; namely, that each Contracting Party eventually has its own Web site dedicated to the issues of the Convention. Achieving this is a long-term vision of the Outreach Programme, as is the establishment of the global Ramsar e-mail network. Contracting Parties are urged to include as part of their Wetland CEPA Action Plans the development of such Web sites dedicated to their wetland-related activities. Contracting Parties, with Ramsar's International Organization Partners and others, are also urged to ensure that any existing or newly established Web sites providing appropriate information resources are 'hot linked' to the Ramsar Convention Web site and vice versa.

33. **A more accessible database for the Wetlands of International Importance** - As the List of Wetlands of International Importance rapidly expands, a priority is to make the information about these flagship sites more freely available by electronic means. The database, managed for the Convention by the Wetlands International office in the Netherlands, will be introduced on the World Wide Web by the end of 1999. Capacity for answering a range of queries on-line is envisaged. Contracting Parties, in developing their Wetland CEPA Action Plans, should anticipate this development and plan for increased use of the Ramsar sites database as a promotional and information tool.

Campaigns

34. **Long and short-term campaigns** - One element to consider as part of a Wetland CEPA Action Plan is that of using a campaign approach to raising awareness and to promoting long-term changes in attitudes and behaviour. Such campaigns can be relatively low profile, gradual escalations of activities to raise awareness of issues or shorter term, possibly higher profile activities taken at an appropriate time or location.
35. **World Wetlands Day and Week** - This was established through Action 3.1.5 of the Convention's Strategic Plan and provides one such option for short-term promotions. It has been celebrated since 1996 with increasing popularity and interest. The Week could coincide with World Wetlands Day, proclaimed as 2 February to mark the adoption of the Convention in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran.
36. **A diversity of approaches** - In some countries there has been success with launching or concluding during World Wetlands Week national campaigns designed to promote issues and engage the general community in local actions. The slogan "think globally - act locally" is one that applies to wetlands. Under the Outreach Programme such action programmes are encouraged. Depending on the circumstances, local or national actions to restore wetlands, collect litter and clean up pollution, remove invasive species or erect educational signs can provide momentum for year-round actions by communities. They can also have relevance to more regional issues such as cooperation in the management of shared wetlands, river basins or migratory species. Some governments are now using World Wetland Day/Week events for special announcements, such as designations of new Wetlands of International Importance, or the adoption of a National Wetlands Policy, so that it becomes recognised at all levels as the time when achievements under the Convention are publicised.
37. **Support from the Ramsar Bureau** - Under the Outreach Programme, the Convention Bureau will continue to advertise and promote World Wetlands Day and Week well in advance and to offer for each year a new theme designed to raise awareness of different aspects of wetland conservation and wise use. The Ramsar Bureau will also continue to provide some resource materials for use at the global, regional, national and local scales in promoting World Wetlands Day and Week. It will also endeavour to use this opportunity each year to launch global initiatives under the Convention so as to give World Wetlands Day a recognised media profile.
38. **Local actions a priority** - Contracting Parties, non-government organizations and local and indigenous people are urged also to use the opportunity of World Wetlands Day and Week to raise awareness of their own activities and programmes relating to wetlands.

Sharing resource materials

39. **Mobilising the flow of information and expertise** - Another element of the Outreach Programme framework is the sharing of resource materials relating to education and training. There exists a very large library of such resource materials, but at present it is spread around the world with few mechanisms in place for it to be shared and exchanged. These resources include curriculum materials for the education of children and adults, less formal teaching tools, awareness-raising materials, and the latest research findings. Some countries have enormous reservoirs of such material, others are desperate to receive it and adapt it for their situations.
40. **Production and distribution of printed materials** - As part of its responsibilities, the Ramsar Bureau produces a range of hard copy information including a regular newsletter, Information Packs, and more detailed technical publications designed to provide guidance in implementing the Convention. Examples of the publications produced include *The Economic Valuation of Wetlands* (1997), *Wetlands, Biodiversity, and the Ramsar Convention* (1997) and *The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands: Its History and Development* (1993). As part of the Outreach Programme the Ramsar Bureau will continue to generate a range of educational and information publications about the Ramsar Convention and its work, as well as more technical guidance. This will be done in the three working languages of the Convention and, as resources allow, in other national languages as well. Posting of these publications on the Web site will also continue. Contracting Parties should ensure, as part of their Wetland CEPA Action Plans, the access and availability of these resources generated by the Ramsar Bureau.
41. **The Bureau as a clearing-house for educational resources** - The development of a Wetland CEPA Action Plan should also review the availability of such educational resource materials from sources other than Ramsar Bureau. Where they are held by a country it is suggested they be made available to the Ramsar Bureau which can advertise their existence at the global level. By operating a clearing-house or global library of educational resources on the Convention's Web site, the Ramsar Bureau can facilitate the sharing of resource materials. In keeping with the concept of a Clearing-house, the Convention's Web site will function as the node or hub of a network of Web sites housing these resources within national governments, non-government organizations or other interested persons who have Web sites. This will be done through the established Wise Use Resource Centre launched on World Wetlands Day in 1998.
42. **Language and local contexts to be considered** - Major impediments to applying the educational resources developed for other countries can be those of language and context. Ramsar Administrative Authorities, the Ramsar Bureau, NGOs and other interested organizations are urged to seek resources and ways to have relevant resource materials translated into local languages and adapted to suit local situations.
43. **Using the Wetland Experts Database** - In 1998 the Ramsar Bureau established the Convention's Wetlands Experts Database, which by early 1999 is expected to have nearly 450 wetland experts registered. The database is designed to provide a service to wetland managers and practitioners by helping to identify suitable experts to assist with addressing wetland management problems. Under the Outreach Programme the Experts Database will be expanded to facilitate the flow of information and knowledge. Ramsar COP7 has also added to the Convention's capacity in this area of technical expertise by inviting each Contracting Party to nominate a Focal Point for matters being considered by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP). (See Resolution VII.2.) This establishes a global

network of such experts that will be advertised by the Convention Bureau to provide another avenue for seeking expert advice. In addition, the Resolution creates links to the expert scientific and technical bodies of those other international conventions with which the Ramsar Convention has Memoranda of Understanding or Cooperation – the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the World Heritage Convention. Further, it establishes links between the Convention's STRP and other expert organizations and networks such as the Society of Wetland Scientists, the International Association of Limnology, the Global Wetlands Economics Network, among others, to allow wetland managers easier access to the information and resources these bodies have available. Within national Wetland CEPA Action Plans, Contracting Parties are urged to note these opportunities for gaining direct access to technical and scientific expertise and to promote this appropriately.

Formal education and training

44. **Wetland conservation and wise use as part of formal curricula** - Another element of the Wetland CEPA review (paragraphs 22 above) is to evaluate the extent to which the curricula of formal education programmes within the country include the Ramsar principles of wetland conservation and wise use. In this regard, the involvement of a representative of the Education Ministry on the Wetland CEPA Task Force, or appropriate mechanism, is strongly recommended. Where the Ramsar principles are not included in such curricula, the Wetland CEPA Task Force, or appropriate mechanism, needs to consider and recommend to the Administrative Authority how best to redress this situation. Where these principles do form part of the formal curricula, Contracting Parties are urged to provide details to the Ramsar Bureau so that this information, and possible models for other countries, can be advertised and made available.
45. **Improved access to training programmes** - In 1998 the Ramsar Bureau began to assemble a *Directory of Wetland Management Training Opportunities* to assist those people who are seeking training in wetland management. By January 1999 it contained information regarding nearly 100 training opportunities which is now available in both hard copy and via the Convention's Web site. As part of reviewing Wetland CEPA needs, capacities and opportunities, Contracting Parties are expected to identify those opportunities for wetland management training which exist within their countries, and to factor this into their Action Plans. A part of such reviews should also include the opportunities for training in Wetland CEPA. Such information should also be passed to the Ramsar Bureau to be incorporated into the *Directory of Wetland Management Training Opportunities*.
46. **Undertake training needs analysis** - While it is important to be aware of the training opportunities that exist, of still greater importance is to establish the priorities for training which apply in the country. A first step in this process has to be to establish the priorities for training assistance. The Wetland CEPA Task Force, or appropriate mechanism, should make these recommendations based on its conclusions in terms of threats to wetlands within the country and the priority target groups. For example, if the Task Force concluded that the greatest threats to wetlands within a certain area were invasive plant species, then clearly training of the local site managers and stakeholders in the practices needed to control or eradicate these species is the highest priority. Alternatively, if local administrators are undervaluing the services and benefits provided by wetlands in approving development projects, then training in economic valuation techniques for these individuals may be the priority.

Centres for education and awareness raising

47. **Working with Environment and Wetland Education Centres** - Where they exist, these centres are ideally placed to promote the principles of wetland conservation and wise use and to foster communication among the 'actors'. Through its Wetlands Link International (WLI) programme, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in the United Kingdom has begun to establish a communication network among such centres to foster information sharing. Appendix II of this Programme provides further details about WLI. Under the Ramsar Convention's Outreach Programme the following actions are recommended to make the WLI initiative a cornerstone of international, regional, national and local actions for Wetland CEPA:
- a. The Ramsar Convention Bureau and the Convention's International Organization Partners will seek resources from the private sector and others to sponsor WLI as a key educational delivery mechanism.
 - b. The Ramsar Convention Bureau will promote WLI through its Web site and encourage the centres forming a part of WLI to become national centres of excellence for promoting Wetland CEPA.
 - c. The Contracting Parties are urged, as part of their Wetland CEPA activities, to consider twinning arrangements between the environment or wetland education centres within their countries and with those of other countries to assist in promoting the goals of the Outreach Programme. Once these arrangements are in place, personnel exchanges and Internet links should be a priority.
 - d. The Contracting Parties are encouraged to inform staff at environment and wetland centres in their country of the existence of the WLI network so that they can contribute to the exchange of information and expertise.
 - e. The National Focal Points for Wetland EPA should work closely with the centres forming part of WLI and, as appropriate, include a representative of such centres on their Wetland CEPA Task Forces, or appropriate mechanism.
 - f. The WLI network's experiences in establishing education centres will be documented and distributed to help others wishing to do likewise.
48. **Seek to establish environment and wetland education centres** - Under the Outreach Programme these facilities are considered a vital element of implementing a Wetland CEPA Action Plan. Above can be seen the range of functions that such centres can provide, apart from offering hands-on experience at wetland environments. Experience also shows that such centres can provide considerable local economic benefit through eco-tourism. In formulating national Wetland CEPA Action Plans, Contracting Parties are urged to consider including provisions for the future establishment of Environment or Wetland Education Centres which can offer a focus for major awareness raising and educational activities. For countries in economic transition, or developing countries, they may also offer substantial financial benefits for promoting sustainable development.
49. **Involving centres of learning** - Museums, zoos, aquaria, botanic gardens and similar institutions can have much to offer in terms of providing technical advice and education of the general public. These facilities also enjoy great popularity with the general community

and therefore offer excellent venues for including wetlands interests in their work. Contracting Parties are encouraged to establish partnerships and work collaboratively with these centres of expertise to promote the values and importance of wetlands. Under the Outreach Programme, these institutions should be encouraged to join the Wetlands Link International initiative described above.

Appendix I

The priority target groups of the Outreach Programme of the Convention on Wetlands

A: PEOPLE IN GENERAL

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale	Behaviour sought
Landowners (especially those who are responsible for managing wetlands)	These are the people who are making decisions which impact directly on wetlands. Ramsar must inform them and provide them with access to expert information.	Sustainable use of wetlands in accordance with Ramsar's principle of wise use.
Indigenous people and local communities	Many indigenous people and local communities associated with wetlands have great knowledge of managing these ecosystems in a sustainable way. Ramsar should aim to encourage the sharing of this experience with other wetland managers.	Sharing of indigenous and community-based knowledge relating to the sustainable use of wetlands and their resources. Continuing sustainable use of wetlands by the indigenous peoples of the world.
Women	Engaging more women in wetland management is a priority, as in many cultures they tend to be more entrepreneurial in the family unit and more amenable to changing lifestyle habits. They may also tend to communicate more often with the children within the family.	The involvement of the whole family in promoting and achieving the sustainable (wise) use of wetlands.
Children	Children are the next generation of environmental managers/caretakers, and Ramsar must ensure that they are aware of the importance of wetlands and how to use them wisely.	Youth taking responsibility for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
National and local non-government organizations	In many countries local NGOs are vital for achieving action. They need to have available to them expert information.	Assisting, encouraging and facilitating the wise use of wetlands at all levels.
Those responsible for electronic and print media	Conveying positive and informative messages about wetlands to the general community can be accelerated through news and other stories in the electronic and print media.	Recognition of the many functions, services and benefits provided by wetlands and to see this reflected in greater and more informed media coverage of wetland issues.
Community leaders and prominent people – athletes, sports people, religious leaders,	Community leaders can use their public profile to draw attention to issues, and those who have empathy for	Promoting the ideals and principles of the Ramsar Convention to raise community awareness and

artists, royalty, etc.	wetland conservation may be ideal ambassadors to promote the Ramsar message.	dispel the continuing negative images of wetlands.
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B) GOVERNMENTS AT ALL LEVELS

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale	Behaviour sought
Environmental policy makers and planners within local administrations, provincial/state and national government administrations.	These officials are key decision-makers at the local level and sub-regional and national scales. Their actions can impact directly on wetlands, positively or negatively, either at the local level or catchment/river basin scale.	To have wetlands considered for all their functions, services and benefits in decision making and planning processes so as to see no further losses or degradation. To see these officials seeking to restore or rehabilitate wetlands as deliberate environmental management tools.
Wetland site managers (wardens, rangers, etc.) within local, provincial/state and national government administrations.	These people have a special need to receive advice on the best practices in managing wetland ecosystems, especially where they are responsible for managing a Ramsar site.	Sustainable use of wetlands in accordance with Ramsar's principle of wise use.
National Administrative Authorities of the Ramsar Convention	They should have the best information at their disposal for application and dissemination.	Responding to all obligations and expectations imposed by the Ramsar Convention, and to be creating the necessary policy, administrative and programme frameworks for action at all levels. To be working in partnership with those responsible for other international and regional environment conventions.
National Administrative Authorities and Focal Points for other environment-related Conventions	If there is to be a more integrated approach to managing land and water resources, including wetlands, there is a need to create greater understanding of and empathy for the Ramsar Convention, among those implementing the other Conventions.	To be working in partnership with those responsible for implementing the Ramsar Convention, and all other international and regional environment conventions, to achieve integrated programmes for implementation.

National consultative and advisory committees for the Ramsar Convention and other environment-related Conventions (such as National Ramsar Committees).	If there is to be a more integrated approach to managing land and water resources, including wetlands, there is a need to create greater understanding of and empathy for the Ramsar Convention among those advising governments on implementation of Ramsar and the other Conventions.	Responding to all obligations and expectations imposed by the Ramsar Convention, and to be creating the necessary policy, administrative and programme frameworks for action at all levels. To be working in partnership with those responsible for implementing the Ramsar Convention, and all other international and regional environment conventions, to achieve integrated programmes for implementation.
The Ministers responsible for all sustainable development portfolios and environment-related Conventions as well as Members of Parliament - National, State/Provincial and local.	Ramsar needs to gain the support of these Ministers and all government members as they have direct input to policy setting, budget allocation, etc. Members of Parliament (those in the opposition parties) may be in this position in the future.	Recognition of the values of using the Ramsar Convention as a positive tool for promoting sustainable use of wetlands and water resources.
National aid agencies, bilateral donors	The Convention needs to ensure that there is a good general understanding about what it does within those organizations that are dealing with governments on a range of sustainable development issues. Ramsar must ensure that the relevant officials are well briefed and able to support Ramsar principles through on-ground projects in the Contracting Parties.	Support for projects which are consistent with Ramsar's wise use principle and conversely to not support projects which will result in wetland destruction or degradation.
Ambassadors and the staff of overseas missions.	It is important that these officials fully understand the Ramsar Convention and <i>modus operandi</i> so that national governments can be better informed.	Recognition of the values of using the Ramsar Convention as a positive tool for promoting sustainable use of wetlands and water resources.

C) INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale	Behaviour sought
Global organizations – World Bank, Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, Global Water	The Convention needs to ensure that there is a good general understanding about what it does within those organizations that are dealing with governments on range of sustainable development	Support for projects which are consistent with Ramsar's wise use principle and conversely to not support projects which will result in wetland destruction or degradation.

Partnership, etc.	issues. Where the organizations have funding programmes, Ramsar must ensure the relevant officials are well briefed and able to support Ramsar principles through on-ground projects in the Contracting Parties.	
Regional organizations – South Pacific Regional Environment Program, European Commission, Southern Africa Development Community, Regional Development Banks, etc.	As above.	As above.
Global NGO partners and other international and regional NGOs	Ramsar's four official NGO partners (IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International, and BirdLife) are all active and effective in promoting the Ramsar Convention. There is a need to involve more of these regional and international NGOs in communicating the Ramsar message.	Assisting, encouraging and facilitating the wise use of wetlands at all levels.
The secretariats of other environment-related instruments (CBD, CCD, CMS, FCCC, CITES, World Heritage, MAB)	This is essential if there is to be increasing synergy among the Conventions at the global and national scales.	To be working in partnership with those responsible for implementing the Ramsar Convention, and all other international and regional environment conventions, to achieve integrated programmes for implementation.

D) THE BUSINESS SECTOR

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale	Behaviour sought
Potential sponsors, supporters	Ramsar promotes sustainable use of wetlands and must therefore engage with the business sectors to ensure that the activities being undertaken by them are not acting contrary to the objectives of the Convention.	Sponsorship support for projects which are consistent with Ramsar's wise use principle and conversely to not undertake or support projects which will result in wetland destruction or degradation.
Key business sectors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water and sanitation 	Within the business sectors these, and some others, are the industries which have the potential for major	Support for activities which are consistent with Ramsar's wise use principle and conversely to not

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • irrigation and water supply • agriculture • mining • forestry • fishing • environmental managers • tourism 	<p>negative impacts on wetlands. Ramsar must promote practices within these industries to ensure that their activities are not resulting in wetland loss.</p>	<p>support or undertake projects which will result in wetland destruction or degradation. Assisting, encouraging and facilitating the wise use of wetlands at all levels.</p>
<p>Professional Associations</p>	<p>Ramsar should encourage the application of Ramsar Wise Use practices through these professional associations.</p>	<p>Assisting, encouraging and facilitating the wise use of wetlands at all levels.</p>

E) THE EDUCATION SECTOR AND LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale	Behaviour sought
<p>Education ministries, curriculum development authorities, examination boards and universities</p>	<p>All these can assist with gaining the inclusion of wetland conservation and wise use issues in school and other formal curricula.</p>	<p>Support for the implementation of the relevant components of appropriately developed Wetland CEPA Action Plans based on this Outreach Programme.</p>
<p>National and international teachers' associations</p>	<p>The incorporation of Ramsar principles into curricula and learning programmes generally can be accelerated through working collaboratively with teacher associations.</p>	<p>Support for the implementation of the relevant components of appropriately developed Wetland CEPA Action Plans based on this Outreach Programme.</p>
<p>National and international networks, associations and councils of environmental education</p>	<p>Wetlands and water issues can be incorporated into the curricula and other materials being developed by these organizations.</p>	<p>Support for the implementation of the relevant components of appropriately developed Wetland CEPA Action Plans based on this Outreach Programme.</p>
<p>Wetland/ Environment Centers, Zoos, Aquaria, Botanic Gardens, etc.</p>	<p>These are ideal venues for promoting the Ramsar message and efforts should be intensified, in order to have suitable information and materials available</p>	<p>Support for the implementation of the relevant components of appropriately developed Wetland CEPA Action Plans based on this Outreach</p>

	within them.	Programme.
National and international networks of libraries.	The library networks provide an excellent avenue for making information on Ramsar and wetlands more accessible to the general community.	Support for the implementation of the relevant components of appropriately developed Wetland CEPA Action Plans based on this Outreach Programme.

Appendix II

About the Wetland Link International (WLI) programme of The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (United Kingdom)

In 1990 The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), a U.K.-based NGO, created the Wetland Link International (WLI) programme, designed to help organizations throughout the world to develop new, and enhance existing, wetland education centres. Beginning with a core group of centres from Australia, France, Hong Kong, Italy, New Zealand, Singapore, Trinidad & Tobago, the U.K., and the U.S.A., the programme (affectionately known as 'Wellie' from 'WLI') grew to over 900 individuals, groups and organizations from over 100 countries logged onto the WLI database.

A twice-yearly newsletter is produced and remains the main organ of communication within the network. Projects on a one-to-one basis have been organized over the past nine years including training, centre development, and broader education and public awareness programmes.

Initial funding for the programme came from commercial sources, but for the past five years WWT has supported the administration of the programme and the salary of its Coordinator. Unfortunately, this funding ceased as of May 1998.

WWT plans to continue to operate the programme and is actively seeking funding to develop it further. Within a revitalised WLI, WWT will broaden the focus of the programme in order to assist individuals, organizations and agencies in the development of programmes of education and communication for wetlands both at centres and beyond. A key tool will be the formation of a 'Learning Zone' within WWT's Web site within which will be housed a database on wetland education and communication resources and key information to help in the development of wetland education centres.

Background on WWT

This U.K.-based organization with a 50+ year history operates eight visitor centres within the country and is presently developing a ninth at The Wetland Centre, London – and it has helped a large number of individuals, organizations, and agencies to develop their own versions throughout the world. Its most famous centre is at Slimbridge, in the west of England, where Sir Peter Scott founded the organization in 1946.

Up to 750,000 people come to WWT Centres each year - this number is expected to rise above 1 million in the year 2000 with the opening of the London centre.

Heightening public awareness of, and education about, the values and benefits of wetlands is a key objective of the organization and WWT has developed many programmes designed to support this, including the Pondwatch and Waterlands campaigns (1988-94), Explorer programmes for schools, the interpretative/exhibit development programmes (including creation of Discovery Centres, Learning through Play centres, etc.). WWT also coordinates the Education and Awareness Specialist Group of Wetlands International.

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