

Ramsar Standing Committee 40

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

DOC. SC40-5 Agenda item 5



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Scope

- ◆ Since November 2008, following COP10 in Changwon, Republic of Korea.
- ◆ The analysis of some global issues is beyond this time frame, taking into account the Resolutions of COP10 and ongoing global debate and actions that affect wetlands.



CONSTITUENCY

- ◆ The Secretariat is currently serving **159 Contracting Parties**, with 1842 wetland sites, totaling 180 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Therefore, the level of activity demanded of the Secretariat continues to increase

Increasing Membership

- ◆ Turkmenistan became 159th Contracting Party. The Convention will enter into force for Turkmenistan on 3 July 2009.
- ◆ More efforts are needed in Asia & Oceania, Africa and the Caribbean



COP10 results and implementing key outcomes

- ◆ Role of the Convention with regard to:
 - Water and wetlands;
 - Climate change and wetlands;
 - People's livelihoods and wetlands;
 - People's health and wetlands;
 - Land use change, biodiversity and wetlands.
 - Urbanization and wetlands
 - Tourism and wetlands

COP10 results and implementing key outcomes

- ◆ COP10 was open to the general public and the local people in and around Changwon city. The hosts for future COPs should endeavour to match those efforts to raise the profile of wetlands in local, national and international planning and decision-making regarding land use options, environmental governance and finance and economics.

COP10 results and implementing key outcomes

- ◆ Changwon Declaration is used by the Secretariat as a key guidance for future work and establishment of priorities; the Secretariat is also seeking opportunities to actively promote the Declaration at national and international levels.



COP10 results and implementing key outcomes

- ◆ Actions taken or underway to convey the key messages of the Declaration and encourage its implementation:
 - field visits and discussions with Contracting Parties at all levels
 - Intensified working relationships with the United Nations agencies and ongoing processes, including UNEP, EMG and UN-Water, UN-Habitat, World Meteorological Organization, GEF, and World Bank, World Tourism Organization, Biodiversity-related Conventions.

Outstanding Challenges

- ◆ Integration of wetland issues into the work of the UN General Assembly, CSD Sessions, Climate Change deliberations and other priority areas for decisions and actions;
- ◆ Standardized and programmed involvement of the Ramsar Secretariat in major debates and processes;
- ◆ Inclusive recognition of the Ramsar Convention as a GEF partner

Suggestions to address Remaining Challenges

- ◆ Sustained Support from Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Secretariat
- ◆ National consultation to raise the profile of wetlands in national planning and decision-making processes
- ◆ Integration of wetland issues in the work of Regional organizations on economic and social development



Suggestions to address Remaining Challenges

- ◆ Improvement of knowledge about the role of wetlands in economic and social development, Climate Change and Biodiversity.
- ◆ Support from Germany to enhance recognition of wetlands in the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)



IOP participation

- ◆ **IOPS:** Excellent participation in STRP's work
- ◆ Projects on wetland management
- ◆ Ramsar site designation
- ◆ World Wetlands Day
- ◆ Input in Ramasar meetings



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Global Trends

The level of activity demanded of the Secretariat continues to increase, as the number of Contracting Parties increases and new challenges are emerging from global debates.



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Existing Partnerships

- ◆ 5 International Organization Partners (IOPs),
- ◆ 4 global conventions,
- ◆ 1 regional convention,
- ◆ 4 UN agencies,
- ◆ 4 global programmes,
- ◆ 4 river/lake basin organizations.
- ◆ One private Company and one alliance

Challenges regarding Existing Partnerships

- ◆ Decreasing voluntary funding from developed Contracting Parties.
- ◆ No signed agreement about funding from governments.
- ◆ Only 1 financial agreement with a private company.



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Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ The focus on key elements for this period is on:
 - Resolution X.3 :The Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands;
 - Resolution X.1: Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015;
 - Resolution X.19: Wetlands and river basin management
 - Resolution X.23 on Wetlands and human health and well-being



Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ The focus on key elements:
 - Resolution X.24: Climate change and wetlands
 - Resolution X.27: Wetlands and urbanization
 - Resolution X.26: Wetlands and extractive industries
 - Resolution X.28: Wetlands and poverty eradication
 - Resolution X.12: Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector



Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands globally:
 - UN-Habitat: *"Cities and Wetlands Management Initiative"*
 - World Tourism Organization
 - Consultation with leader of EEB Initiative (the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity), Mr. Pavan Sukhdev and members of advisory Board



Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - **Africa:**
 - ◆ Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAM)
 - ◆ Legal framework on biofuels production and their impacts on wetlands in Côte d'Ivoire, in accordance with Resolution X.25;
 - ◆ Tourism and wetlands in Seychelles, in line with Resolutions X.10, 11, and 30;
 - ◆ Assisting the government of Niger to complete its National Wetland Policy and Action Plan.

Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - Africa:
 - ◆ Training of Magistrates to enhance their knowledge on environmental law, including MEAS to protect the environment
 - ◆ Enhancing collaboration between the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Justice and Human rights
 - ◆ Joint activities between Ramsar, 6 other Conventions, UNEP, Universities and African Institute for Environment and IEEF



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Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - In the Americas:
 - ◆ Progress on wetland policies or water policies and water programmes that integrate wetland issues.
 - ◆ National Water Programme 2007-2012 of Mexico
 - ◆ In Brazil, the rehabilitation of Aranuama Lagoon
 - ◆ In the USA, progress made regarding the new goal to move beyond the “No Net Loss” of wetlands: overall gain by creating, improving, and protecting over three million acres of wetlands

Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - **In Asia and Oceania:**
 - ◆ The Republic of Korea is taking actions to implement the Changwon Declaration at national level
 - ◆ Republic of Korea has published the vision and policy goals on water resources to be led by the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs
 - ◆ Japan organizing CBD COP10 briefing

Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - **In Asia and Oceania:**
 - ◆ In China, measures adopted to better manage the Yangtze River and the Yellow River
 - ◆ In Japan a policy paper "*Achieving Water Security Worldwide and in Japan*" and World Lake Vision (WLV) and the Integrated Lake Basin Management (ILBM).

Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - **In Asia and Oceania:**
 - ◆ In Central Asia, discussions underway to address the most prominent problems in the irrigation sector;
 - ◆ The Australian Government has recognised the importance of wetlands through **Caring for our Country**, a \$2.25 billion, five year initiative and under the \$12.9 billion, 10 year **Water for the Future plan**, which will help prepare Australia for climate change and reduced water availability.

Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - **In Asia and Oceania:**
 - ◆ **The East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership** is making progress, aiming to conserve migratory waterbirds across the East Asian - Australasian Flyway for the benefit of people and biodiversity, The Republic of Korea has offered to host the Secretariat of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership

Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - **In Europe:**
 - ◆ joint support of Switzerland and the Netherlands to the Ramsar Secretariat in conveying the message of the Changwon Declaration
 - ◆ France is reorganizing and reviving the national platform that facilitates the implementation of the Convention in the country (the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee).
 - ◆ Implementing Resolution X.29

Goal 1: Wise use of wetlands

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration to enhance wise use of wetlands at regional level:
 - **In Europe:**
 - ◆ The Secretariat believes that the EU Water Framework Directive can enhance the implementation of Ramsar principles, and it encourages the Administrative Authorities to make the best use of this directive
 - ◆ The Secretariat also encourage CPs to involve the Ramsar Administrative Authorities in the European Union-China River Basin Management Program that is underway

GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

- ◆ Ramsar site designation and management :
 - Since COP10, the following Ramsar site designations have been recorded:
 - Africa: 8 sites, in Congo, Gabon, Mauritania and Sudan.
 - Asia & Oceania: 8 sites in China, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan.



GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

- ◆ Ramsar site designation and management :
 - Site designation in process:
 - 59 from the Africa region,
 - 26 from the Americas region,
 - 32 from the Asia and Oceania regions,
 - and 8 from Europe.

GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

- ◆ Ramsar site designation and management :
 - New release of *Ramsar Sites of the World* book



GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

New release of *Ramsar Sites of the World* book:

- ◆ The Ministry of Environment Korea, WWT, and UNDP/GEF Korea Wetland Project are pleased to announce the publication of *Ramsar Sites of the World* book in support of the goals of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands.



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GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

New release of *Ramsar Sites of the World* book:

- ◆ This new publication shows exemplary conservation practices of 17 Ramsar sites around the world: South Korea, Mali, China, India, Iran, Japan, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, the UK, Brazil, Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand.



GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

- ◆ Suggestion to improve Ramsar site designation and management :
 - Put more effort on management of sites as well as monitoring and evaluation of existing management plans.
 - Give particular attention to potential Ramsar sites
 - Include in Regional Initiatives a strong component on management of sites.



GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

- ◆ Threats to Ramsar sites and the Montreux Record
 - Document SC40-15 provides a detailed update on the status of Ramsar sites and the Montreux Record through the period following COP10.



Goal 3: International cooperation

- ◆ Participation in the 34th Session of GEF Council in November 2008; and Ramsar provided input in the review of the situation for transboundary surface water basins, transboundary groundwater systems, and Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs).
 - ◆ Participation in 25th UNEP Governing Council;
 - ◆ IPBES discussion
 - ◆ 2010 Biodiversity Targets and Beyond
- Biodiversity Liaison Group

GOAL 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness.

- ◆ Suggestion to improve the capacity of the Convention:
- ◆ Contracting Parties to take up specific issues and agree to take the lead on improving their implementation:
 - establishing and leading an ad hoc working group
 - organizing seminars or other working meetings



GOAL 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness.

- ◆ Practical examples could include :
 - the Ramsar Advisory Board on Capacity Building set up and sponsored by the Netherlands.
 - Support of the Swiss government for a training session organized in Côte d'Ivoire for French-speaking magistrates, in order to build their capacity in dealing with not only the Ramsar Conventions, but also other environmental conventions as well.



GOAL 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness.

- ◆ The Convention's financial capacity:

- Seeking voluntary contributions or a secondment of a suitable experts;

- Enhancing cross-sectoral recognition of wetland values: biodiversity conservation, water supply, coastal protection, flood defense, climate change, food security, poverty eradication, tourism, cultural heritage, and scientific research.



GOAL 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness.

◆ CEPA activities :

- World Wetlands Day 2009: successful campaign on Rivers Basins
- Preparation of WWD 2010: "*Wetlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change*", with special attention to Tourism as a means for wise use
- World Wetlands Day Assessment has been completed during 2008



GOAL 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness.

- ◆ **Revision of the Ramsar Web site:**
 - Financial Support from Danone Group
 - Managing the content migration of all of the existing Ramsar site (23,850 files) into a new Java-based database technology.
 - Migration itself into the new technology to take place in early April;
 - Secretariat to manually complete the migration/indexing and begin the testing before the new Web site will be ready for the public.