The VI Workshop of the Regional Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of High Andean Wetlands, organized by the Bolivian Government through the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, and the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) was held in La Paz, Bolivia from 21-24 September 2009.

The main objective of the VI Workshop of the Strategy was to discuss the impact of climate change in high Andean wetlands and the definition of priorities for the triennium 2009-2012 with special emphasis in the definition of funding mechanisms for its implementation.

Discussion Forum 21 of September

The opening was made by the Vice Ministry of Environment and Biodiversity of Bolivia Mr. Juan Pablo Ramos who welcome the country representatives and organizations and expressed the importance of not only having a active technical discussion about climate change but also the preparation of a declaration about wetlands and climate change that can be used in the upcoming discussions in Copenhague and Bangkok by the country members of the High Andean Strategy.
During the meeting the Ramsar Secretariat made a special recognition to the countries that have made designations of High Andean Ramsar Sites in 2009 like Argentina, with the Ramsar site Puneñas de Catamarca, Bolivia with the Lipez Ramsar site and Chile with the sites Salares de Pujísa and Aguas Calientes.
Mr. Ramos Vice ministry of Environment of Bolivia received the Ramsar certificate of los Lipez Ramsar site
Chile was recognized by the designation of two High Andean Ramsar sites (Alejandra Figueroa received the certificates)

The discussion about climate change and high Andean wetlands was focused in the agenda and main projects and actions that are being implemented in the region for different agencies and organizations at the national and international level as World Bank, Organization of American States, Andean Community of Nations, Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental studies of Colombia (IDEAM).
Mr. Walter Vergara presented the World Bank agenda in climate change
Mr. Richard Huber from the OAS recalled on the importance of wetlands for social, economic and environmental goods and services.
The Ramsar Secretariat highlighted the importance of wetlands and the impact of climate change
The CMS also participated in the meeting with a presentation about Migratory Species, and expressed the willing to become a member of the contact group of the Strategy.
The effect of climate change in Latin America. Report of the IPCC. David Cruz Choque
Adaptation of Central Andean glaciers Sr. José Luís Gutiérrez. Viceministerio de Medio Ambiente, Biodiversidad y Cambio Climático, Bolívia
Adaptation to climate change, Mountain Ecosystems. INAP. Sra. Luz Marina Arevalo. IDEAM, Colombia.
At the end of the forum there was a discussion panel with the invited speakers and participants.

The key messages from the discussion panel were:

1. High Andean wetlands are very vulnerable to climate change and urgent measures must be taken to fill in the gaps about the key role they play in the hydrological cycle and as carbon storage.
2. There are many projects leading by the World Bank, OAS and the Andean Community of Nations under development about climate change in the northern High Andean Countries with a focus on support the adaptation process to climate change and improving quality of life without increasing green house emissions.
3. Efforts must be taken to implement actions to understand the key role of High Andean wetlands not only in the hydrological cycle but also their importance in maintaining the environmental services they provide including the sequestration of carbon.

Meeting of the contact group 23-24 September

During the meeting of the contact group of the strategy the governments presented the advances in its implementation as well as the IOP’s, technical networks.
The Andean Community of Nations, did a presentation about the climate change in the Andean Environmental Agenda.
Corina Lehman from Argentina
Omar Rocha representative from Bolivia
Colombian representatives Alejandro Ayala and Ricardo Agudelo
Alejandra Figueroa (Chile) and Marco Araya (Costa Rica)
Sergio Lasso from Ecuador
Jesus Manzanilla (Venezuela) and José Carrasco (Peru)
There was a full representation of the IOP’s and technical networkers (from left to right High Andean Flamencos, Wetlands International, Birdlife, CREHO, IUCN) as well as from the Andean Community of Nations, and CMS.
CONDESAN and WWF Colombia and International
Amiro Perez (Birdlife Americas)
The government worked together in La Paz Declaration
Nadia Castro from the Ramsar Secretariat
The contact group worked in the definition of priority actions for a regional project

**Outcomes of the Meeting**

For the funding mechanism of the strategy the countries member agreed to work in the preparation of a regional project with the support of the Ramsar Secretariat/OAS for evaluation of ecosystem services of high Andean wetlands to be presents to GEF5 in 2010.

Additionally, the Contact Group set the priorities for funding under another regional project to be submitted to the Spanish Cooperation Agency.

Also it was of particular relevance the Paz Declaration which recognize the vulnerability of High Andean Wetlands to climate change due to its limit adaptation capacity and decrease of water availability in regions supplied by meltwater from mountain ranges. In the same regard it encourage that in the upcoming meetings in the framework of the UNCC, measures be considered to protect the ecological character of High Andean Wetlands, promote its restoration and maintain the ecosystems services they provide including carbon sequestration.

**Field Visit**

The field visit took place at the Ramsar site Titicaca Lake
Capitan of the Catamaran
Some relax while arriving to Isla del Sol.........
Twins??Julio Ospina (WWF Colombia) and Marco Araya (Costa Rica)
The wetlands managers of the future……………..Omar Rocha with always smiling Sofia
(Photo credit Denis Landenberg)
The Participants were welcomed by the Isla del Sol Community
SITIO RAMSAR - LAGO TITICACA (Sector boliviano)

Conservemos nuestro lago, el más alto y navegable del mundo,
PARA VIVIR BIEN

Ubicación: LA PAZ - BOLIVIA
Altura: 3809 - 4200 msnm.
Superficie: 800,000 ha.
Ubicación Geográfica: Latitud: 15°16'21" - 15°50'20" (LS)
Longitud: 70°40'10" - 69°46'23" (LW)
Fecha de Designación: 11 de Septiembre de 1998
Nº de Sitio Ramsar: 959
Afluentes: Ríos Súchis, Huancané, Remis, Coata, Ilave, Catari, Tiwanaku, Koka
Desagües: Río Desaguadero o Aullagas

La Convención sobre las Humedales, firmada en Ramsar, Irán, en 1971, es un tratado intergubernamental que busca fomentar la protección de los humedales y sus ecosistemas.
The Government of Bolivia (Omar Rocha) hand over a banner for the Ramsar site to the president of the community. (Photo credit Denis Landenberg)
The Senior Advisor for the Americas thanked the hospitality and welcome to the Isla del Sol Community and highlighted the importance of the cultural values of the Titicaca Lake.
The president of Isla del Sol thanks the visit of the Ramsar Group
Performance of typical Bolivian music
Great expectation about the visitors......................(Photo credit Denis Landenberg)
The local communities doing the traditional hand made handicrafts (Photo credit Denis Landenberg)
Participants from Chile (Manuel Contreras, Magdalena Fernández) and María Rivera
Richard Huber with some people from the community
In the way back participants were baptized according to the local tradition.
The participants having a good time??????........................
Vice Ministry of the Environment with the Americas team of the Ramsar Secretariat
The meeting was covered by many Bolivian media. See journal report at http://www.laprensa.com.bo/domingo/11-10-09/11_10_09_edicion1.php