

Proposal for a high level ministerial meeting following Ramsar COP9

Wetlands and Water – supporting life, sustaining livelihoods: The road from Kampala

The theme of Ramsar COP9 will focus on issues of how wise use of wetlands can really help in the general discussions on sustainable development. A particular focus is how, over the next decade (the international decade of Water) the policies and procedures agreed under the Ramsar convention can have wide applicability.

This means greater support from the development community, both bi- and multi-lateral, and establishing a new concordance between north and south, and south and south.

The meeting will be organized in the form of an interactive dialogue with a Chair from Uganda or AMCEN (Minister of Environment of Libya). The participants will be Ministers of Environment/ Water resources and or Development, or Foreign affairs. Ministers will be invited to exchange views on the subject, which constitutes an essential dimension in the implementation of the wise use of wetlands concept, especially in developing countries. A draft Kampala declaration will be discussed, which will have been the focus of discussion during the COP itself.

This declaration will deal with issues related to the accessibility of financial and technical resources for the management of wetlands in developing countries (i.e: a financial mechanism for the implementation of the Convention, the role of the GEF, the role of NEPAD, linkages with UNEP and its programmes, the links with UN water, making the best use of the International Decade of Water)

The lack of vision and political commitment on wetlands management in the developing world (only a couple of Africa countries have a National Wetlands Policy) may be seen as an opportunity for a new North - South partnership, where the North will help support initial preparation of a series of National Wetlands Policies (+ Action Plans) in the South.

The Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention anticipates the participation of about 20 Ministers for Environment or Development from the Northern and Southern hemispheres for a meeting scheduled to last not more than a day.